Thomas Holley Chivers
Friend of Poe

S. FOSTER DAMON

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THOMAS HOLLEY CHIVERS

FRIEND OF POE

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BOOKS BY

S. FOSTER DAMON

THOMAS HOLLEY CHIVERS
FRIEND OF POE

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WILLIAM BLAKE

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ASTROLABE

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TILTED MOONS

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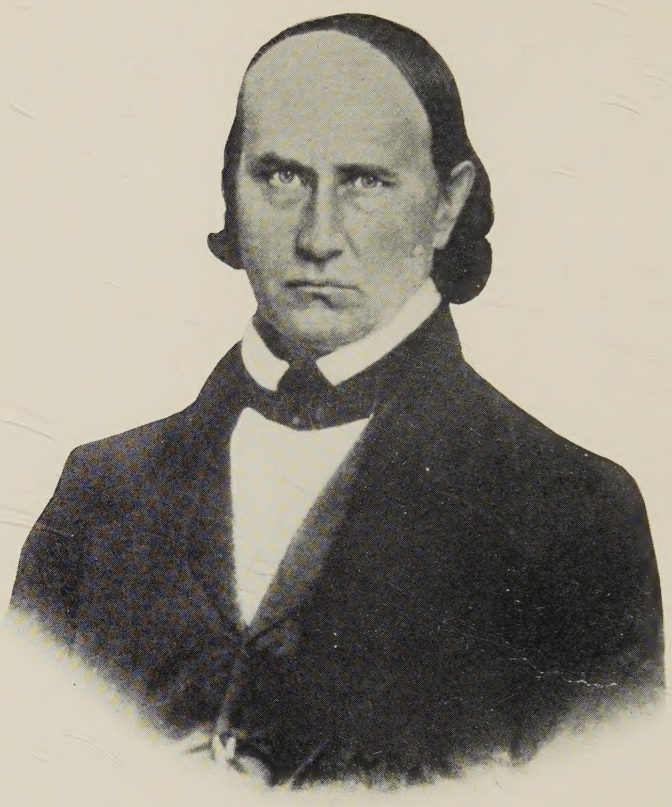

Thos H. Chivers

THOMAS HOLLEY CHIVERS

FRIEND OF POE

With Selections from His Poems

A STRANGE CHAPTER

In American Literary History

BY

S. FOSTER DAMON

MDCCCCXXX

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FRIEND OF POE

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First Edition

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TO

LINDSAY TODD DAMON

COUSIN, COLLEAGUE, AND COMRADE

107272

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THROUGH *the many years in which I have been collecting material for this book I have become indebted to many persons. First among them is Dr. Lewis Chase, ardent Chiversian, who has combed continents searching for Chiversiana in preparation for his own important work, and who has generously offered me the fruits of his labors. He first acquainted me with* Search After Truth, *gave me the place and date of Chivers's second marriage, and opened to me the rich mines of the* Georgia Citizen *— of which, however, I have availed myself only sparingly. With him I plan to issue a definitive edition of Chivers's complete works, as a publication of the Harris Collection of American Poetry at Brown University. Secondly, I am indebted to Mr. W. S. Irvine, of Atlanta, Georgia, ardent Chiversian, who furnished me with the substance of Chivers's will (thereby establishing his first marriage) and a photostat of the title-page of* Heroes of Liberty, *besides answering patiently a number of questions. Thirdly, I am indebted to Mr. Robert Housum, of Cleveland, Ohio, who generously lent me his unique copy of* The Path of Sorrow *and permitted me to reproduce the title-page. Fourthly, I am indebted to Dr. Thomas R. Boggs, of Baltimore, for permission to reproduce his superb photograph of Chivers.*

Acknowledgments

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I am also indebted to various libraries: first of all to the Harris Collection of American Poetry at Brown University, which contains the most nearly complete collection of Chivers's books in existence. Dr. Harry Lyman Koopman, the curator, was so kind as to send some of these precious volumes to Harvard for my use many years ago. The Widener Library of Harvard University has also been exceedingly kind, not only in throwing open its stacks to me and sending for books it did not have, but also for permission to publish extracts from Leoni, *the manuscript of which is in the enormous theater collection. The Boston Public Library has permitted me to reproduce various pages from the Chivers-Poe correspondence preserved in its Griswold Collection. I am by no means unaware of the remarkable collection of Chivers manuscripts in the Huntington Library. It so happened, however, that my work on Chivers was finished before this material emerged from obscurity and went to California; therefore I used Professor Woodberry's digest of that ma-*

terial, which he published in the Century Magazine *and later in his standard* Life of Poe. *So well did he do his work that when the material became accessible, I did not find it necessary to alter any of my own manuscript. I am therefore indebted, though indirectly, to both library and scholar. To the Library of the University of Chicago I am indebted for the loan of Mr. Ardrey Shields McIlwaine's excellent Master's thesis,* The Beauchamp Tragedy in American Drama. *The American Antiquarian Society of Worcester, the Providence Athenæum, the Boston Athenæum, and the New York Public Library are among those that have generously admitted me to their stacks.*

S. Foster Damon

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Thomas Holley Chivers, M.D. *frontispiece*
From a large ferrotype photograph taken about 1839–1840, owned by Dr. Thomas R. Boggs.

FACING PAGE

Title page of *The Path of Sorrow* 68
From the unique copy owned by Robert Housum, Esq.

Page of Letter from Chivers to Poe, September 9, 1845 150
Enclosing money, quoting one of his sonnets, and referring to Poe's drinking. Owned by the Boston Public Library.

Edgar A. Poe 206
Reversed from a daguerreotype taken November 14, 1848, at Providence, which Poe gave to Mrs. Whitman on the same day; now owned by Brown University.

Letter from Chivers to Poe, February 21, 1847 234
Offering to take care of Poe as long as he lived.

INTRODUCTION

Dryden, in one of his letters to John Dennis, remarked: "I remember poor Nat Lee, who was then upon the Verge of Madness, yet made a sober and a witty Answer to a bad Poet, who told him, *It was an easy thing to write like a Madman; No,* said he, *'tis very difficult to write like a Madman, but 'tis a very easy matter to write like a Fool.*"

Thomas Holley Chivers, M.D., of Georgia, wrote like both madman and fool; no one hitherto has attempted to separate his very remarkable best from his worst. But whatever he wrote, good or bad, was extraordinary. "Extraordinary" is the adjective that recurs time and again in every account of him that was ever written. A poet of the most striking originality, he influenced his friend Poe, also Swinburne and Rossetti, not to mention minor figures like Henry B. Hirst. Yet after his death, the "wild Mazeppa of letters" became the "Lost Poet"; his eleven volumes are extremely rare; no complete list of them has even been issued; and his very name is unknown to all but a few scholars and collectors.

To those who know about poetry first-hand,

Chivers's work is of great interest; and it may be that only the specialist can understand what this early American actually achieved. Gradually he developed two tendencies, both of remarkable value as experiments. On the one hand, he endeavored to express subtle states of mind by a series of words (often his own invention) and of images, the surface meanings of which are subordinate to the general hypnotic effect. Thus Chivers is kin to Coleridge and Poe; but he so far surpassed them in audacity that he anticipated for himself the fundamental theory of Symbolist poetry. Naturally enough, the public received these poems with mirth and contempt. Chivers also tried to build poems out of pure sound, with results that are surprisingly modern. He would elaborate railroad rhythms or bell tones or negro cadences or Chinese music into a long poem intended for recitation; these poems remind one today of the parallel experiments of our modern troubadours, especially Vachel Lindsay; [1] but, discouraged by a contemptuous public, Chivers left these poems uncollected in the pages of various magazines now excessively rare.

[1] Many years ago, when Mr. Lindsay was telling an audience that little was known about American poetry, I meekly asked him if he knew Chivers's work. He replied by reciting one of his poems. I do not think, however, that he could have known the most Lindsayish poems of Chivers.

To the literary historian, Chivers is the man who claimed to have written the poems which inspired Poe to write the "Raven." It has been generally assumed that Chivers was the plagiarist; but it is clear that his poems were written first, and were in Poe's mind when Poe got his big inspiration. Now that we have learned something of the workings of the creative mind, we can see how several inferior poems of Chivers amalgamated in Poe's mind and were sublimated into a masterpiece. The question has ceased to be one of "plagiarism" at all; it is merely one of "influence."

Poe was not the only person to be stimulated by these strange poems of the forgotten poet: Swinburne and Rossetti also profited by them; and Kipling borrowed a note or two for his own use.

But Chivers must stand on his own merits if he is to win any place outside a museum of literary curiosities. Such a place, I believe, is his by right. Yet it would be absurd to set him up as a mighty poet unrecognized by his stupid countrymen. Posterity has been unfair, but not without cause and excuse. For Chivers is the supreme example of genius wholly unregulated by any talent whatsoever. In those early days of American poetry the critical sense was usually in abeyance; but Chivers

had none at all. He could compose poems so splendid that Poe, the tomahawk critic, once wrote him, "I look upon some of your late pieces as some of the finest I have *ever read*"; then in the very next moment Chivers could indite something so incredibly bad — so solemnly absurd or completely frantic — that the reader, in a burst of helpless mirth, forgets the real poetry. Chivers lacked both the low and the high humor: the quick touch of levity and the deep sense of balance. Pathos and bathos sounded alike to his ear; beauty and insanity were equal in ecstasy. He straddled the famous fence between the sublime and the ridiculous, and quite as often fell on the one side as on the other.

Moreover, all his poetic lore was self-got. A pioneer like Sylvester Judd, he lacked academic training, and so had to find his own solution for every problem that turned up. He knew nothing about correctness. He made up words; his grammar was shaky; his rhymes were often common; he repeated his metaphors over and over; he padded his stanzas; he borrowed the best lines of other poets; he mixed his mythologies; he said silly, inconsequential things; he lacked restraint of every kind. He was morbid — worse yet, fashionably morbid; he believed in angels and was always writing

about them; he was appallingly sincere; he printed far too much, under the impression that everything versified at the proper heat of enthusiasm was sacred. Nevertheless, through all his work, good and bad, runs the curious undercurrent of power which is the peculiar manifestation of genius.

It requires a special taste to enjoy Chivers. It requires an eagerness for psychological subtleties and curiosities, such as vision, telepathy, and sense-confusion; a taste for the grand and the grandiloquent; an enthusiasm for romantic sublimity; an ear for meter; an eye able to pick a diamond from a rubbish-heap; some feeling for a century now little known — the nineteenth century in America; and last of all, a sense of humor ready at all points but not too lightly exploded. The horse laugh is too much with us; in many circles it is the sole director of conversation. Laughter is healthy, but uncontrolled it becomes cheap and blinding. The public always laughs at anything genuinely new in the arts, and anything old enough to be unfashionable. Chivers wrote some poems which would have made even Satan smile; but his best work deserves a more serious attitude.

A knowledge of his century is also necessary, for Chivers was in touch with many of the more radical

movements of his day. He was a Transcendentalist, an Associationist, and a Swedenborgian. He was a Spiritualist at the outset of its career, but attacked it when raps and table-tipping began to manifest. His own psychic experiences gave him clues to the after-world; he studied the Kabalah, the Neo-Platonists, and the Church Fathers in order to verify his conclusions about the great mystery. Americans have always had a keen sense of the occult; Chivers was among those who were at home on the borderlands of consciousness. It was an age of faith: we must lose something of our scepticism, and get back to that state of mind when we can understand what death could mean and what people could suffer from the fear of it — when we can respect a man's honest belief in heaven and his testimony about immortality. It was also an age of oratory, when the spoken word had mighty power. Chivers's poems were meant for public delivery, and Poe often read them in his lectures.

Chivers must also be given credit for being the first man to dramatize the *Kentucky Tragedy* and the legend of Deirdre. He wrote several plays, and although actors and managers considered producing them, none ever reached the boards. We have forgotten what romantic tragedy was; we

must acquire some feeling for the grand manner before we can pass judgment upon Chivers's dramas.

Such imaginative exercises are excellent for the soul. Once we get the knack, the " Lost Poet " begins to take shape before us as a man of towering personality, with a curious genius, whose uncurbed experimentation developed slowly and logically along sane lines, through a tangle of failures, until he passed his friend Poe and produced some ultra-modern, hypnotic works which nobody else could have written, and which today have a permanent value.

THOMAS HOLLEY CHIVERS

FRIEND OF POE

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Chapter I

Dawn Over America

THE nineteenth century dawned fair over America. The bitter past was dead. Man was freed politically, and he was freeing himself spiritually as well. The fierce pangs of the brain, which had produced the finest body of political writings known to the world, and had culminated in the Revolution, were being continued by the higher and subtler conflicts of the soul. The tyrant of earth was defeated; the ancient tyrant of the air also should fall. At Concord had been fired a shot heard round the world; now by Concord Bridge new grapes were growing; new quill-pens were being trimmed for a mightier conflict. Universalism and Unitarianism were doing their part. And as the gunpowder fumes of the war and the sulphur fumes of Calvinism drifted away and

melted into the thin morning air, it was manifest that both God and man were good — good, not evil; that nightmare was over forever.

The glory of dawn lay upon the morning-land. Stars yet glittered in the sky; dew lay fresh upon every deed, every thought. Man stood with naked feet firm upon his own earth. New England was a garden, and one cannot build a garden without magically attracting deity thereto. Eternity was near. God bent close above his triumphant athletes.[1]

> Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven!

One of the spiritual adventures that lay ahead was the creation of a literature — a literature that should express the new ideas and ideals of the new land. " In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book, or goes to an American play, or looks at an American picture or statue? " sneered

[1] How puzzling this consciousness of God proved in Europe may best be illustrated by reference to Professor John Nichol's *American Literature, An Historical Sketch* (Edin. 1882), terminal Note F, " Practical Religion " (pp. 466–467). An unreliable book, interesting chiefly for its foreign point of view. The professor is quite capable of manipulating texts to prove his points: see his account of Judd's *Margaret* (pp. 362–366) and compare his quotations with the original (1845, pp. 267–268; 1851, vol. ii, pp. 39–42). He uses an exclamation point to mark an absurdity created by his omissions; he deprecates an anticlimax caused by his docking of a sentence; and by dexterous selections he changes a passage in praise of New England into dispraise.

Sidney Smith, in one sentence doing more harm than he could ever do of good.[2] It was not quite fair: colonies do not produce literature, and America had scarcely ceased being a colony. But even as he wrote, across the Atlantic a thousand penknives were trimming quills. America already had set itself the task of authorship.

To understand American literature we must examine some of the differences between the literatures of England and America — differences seldom recognized and always confusing because spiritual proximities are often thought to be identities. The two literatures look so much alike, offhand, that critics continually judge American literature by English standards, thus ignoring the very well-spring of its existence. This is unfair. American literature has its own messages, its own idioms and techniques; and by its own standards it must be judged.

One great cause of difference is that the eighteenth century did not reach America until it was breaking up in Revolution. For one thing, in spite of Freneau, Trumbull, and Fessenden, America knew almost nothing of the bitter satires which, through Dryden's transcendental contempt,

[2] Review of Seybert's *Annals of the United States*, 1820.

Wycherley's rage, Swift's superhuman disgust, Pope's hysterical hates, and Johnson's expert rudenesses, established a tradition which still maintains its undercurrent of " plain-dealing " abroad. Such attitudes found no working place in America's federated ranks; and today all such writings need long explanatory preambles in American colleges.

For another thing, America lacked the tradition of Latin culture. It made few Latin verses; it quoted few Latin authors in senatorial debate. Virgil and Horace were curiosities. Classical tragedy, the three devastating unities, were unknown. The whole tendency of neoclassical form meant nothing in the new land.

Yet again, American literature was always directed to the public at large, not to the fashionable world, or to specialists. Gradually, throughout the seventeenth century, English writers had narrowed their appeal and had addressed themselves more and more exclusively to a social or an intellectual aristocracy. A Milton, once he was out of politics, wrote for those who could understand him; a Dryden, for the courtiers of the Merry Monarch. Bunyan and Defoe, who wrote for the lower classes only, were despised by the polite. In America, how-

ever, no such narrowing of audience took place. The religious controversies of the seventeenth century and the political controversies of the eighteenth involved everybody. By the nineteenth century, indeed, we find a more limited appeal in Poe, Emerson, Whitman; yet even here there was some intent to be national. And today, the popular arts in America are often the most vigorous.

Yet America was susceptible to various elements of eighteenth-century culture in England. The decency and elegance advocated by Cibber, Steele, and Addison were duly admired; the sentimentalism represented by Cibber, Steele, Richardson, and Sterne was imitated; the romantic outbursts of Macpherson and Mrs. Radcliffe found their many readers; and the revolutionary writings of Tom Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Godwin roused enthusiasm.

But the radical cause for the differences between the two literatures lies not in the inability of eighteenth-century England to impress America with its satires and its neoclassicism, but in the persistence of the seventeenth century. "While England was undergoing her transformation into modernity," wrote Barrett Wendell, in an oftenquoted sentence, "there was no similar change

across the seas, where the elder temper had lingered on almost till the present day." [3] Its soul-searching ran on into the nineteenth century. The great ideas that had founded and established Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, were not soon worked out on the new soil. Whether it were the Puritan on his knees in his closet, watching for some token of Election, or the Dissenter, determined that his opponent should be conquered by intelligence alone, or the Quaker illuminated by the Inner Light, all had their eyes turned inward upon their own spiritual fabric. And although today the figure of Benjamin Franklin obscures that of Jonathan Edwards, and the practical man hides the mystic, yet mysticism — or rather, susceptibility to psychological impression — has marked most of the important American writers from the beginning.

We may despise Puritan theology today; yet the common sense that made Massachusetts lead the world in doing away with witchcraft was not the merely negative work of " reason," but of intuitive guesses at what was actually going on The power of a Jonathan Edwards came direct from his understanding of mental reality; and passages from his

[3] *The Temper of the Seventeenth Century in English Literature,* New York, 1904, p. 353.

works are frequently used for illustrations in psychological text-books.

Consequently, we should not be surprised that the first novel written by an American and published here — Sarah Morton's *Power of Sympathy* (1789) — shows something of the national flair. At first sight, it is only an imitation of Richardson — a novel of sensibility, in the usual epistolary form. But subtract all the European elements, and a small residue of originality is left: a crude, startled awareness of fierce mental forces beneath the reach of the human will. It is a tale of incest, and to Mrs. Morton incest was not the simple literary device it had been for the Elizabethans, Dryden, Fielding, and Walpole. It was a real knot which neither will nor reason, but only death, could untie. "Sympathy" to her did not have the modern, weak significance of that word; she used it as a mediæval physician would have understood it — a power like the magnet's over the iron, a natural force unknowable, uncontrollable — and to Mrs. Morton, horrible.

Charles Brockden Brown, the first American novelist to be read extensively abroad, gained his originality and power simply by adding psychological depth to a literary fashion of the day. Mrs. Radcliffe had suddenly popularized the Gothic novel

by magnifying its thrills, but at the end she invariably paid her tribute to the Age of Reason by explaining everything. She did not believe in ghosts, and she would not impose on her readers. So she lets the light of ordinary day suddenly dispel the marvelous glooms she had so dexterously invoked. She tears the veil away, and her tortures are waxworks, her ghost a sleep-walker. But Brown saw the æsthetic treason in this, and he found a middle way between the trivial supernaturalism of Walpole and the deflating rationalism of Mrs. Radcliffe. He boasted that he employed "means hitherto unemployed by preceding authors." He abandoned their "puerile superstition and exploded manners: Gothic castles and chimeras," substituting for them "a series of adventures, growing out of the condition of our country, and connected with one of the most common and most wonderful diseases of the human frame." [4] He indeed employs Mrs. Radcliffe's device of explaining the supernatural, but he explains it not by any stage trick, but by seeking its true source — the depths of the human soul. When he tears away the veil, he reveals but deeper horrors. The mysterious voice is caused by a ventriloquist; but the ventriloquist is a fiend inciting

[4] Edgar Huntly, "To The Public."

a religious fanatic to murder — and the corpses are real. Instead of ending with a sleep-walker, he begins with one, and shows what inner hell caused this common and wonderful disease.

Thus Brown, by substituting the genuine horrors of the mind for the mechanical stage trick, was following his instinct as an American quite as much as he did by his choice of American subjects; and he stands much nearer to Dostoyevsky than to Mrs. Radcliffe. His final explanations, as Peacock pointed out in *Gryll Grange,* do not destroy or diminish the original effect. Consequently, though his grand style and hasty construction may provoke modern giggles, he shared with Schiller and Goethe the honor of forming Shelley's character; [5] Keats recommended him as a " powerful genius "; [6] Hazlitt praised him frequently; Godwin was influenced by him; [7] and the list could be easily extended. And as a result of Brown's writings, the tale of terror reached in America, through Poe and Hawthorne, a higher form than it ever reached in England.

The wave of new thought that swept America at the turn of the century and gave character to much of its literature for some time to come may be

[5] Peacock, *Memoirs of Shelley.*
[6] Letter to Woodhouse (A. Lowell, *John Keats* II, 336).
[7] Preface to *Mandeville.* Brown was also strongly influenced by Godwin.

largely explained by the persistence of the seventeenth century's habit of introspection, now given new life by the discovery of new points of attack. To understand it, therefore, we must examine the decay of the old theology and the new tendencies which brought it about.

Calvinism, already on the wane because it did not reflect life in the New World, was clamped firmly upon all the orthodox churches in 1754 by the publication of Jonathan Edwards's *On the Freedom of the Will,* and ably seconded by the earthquakes of 1755. The strength of Edwards's writings came not so much from his championship of orthodoxy as from a new reference to reality. For Edwards justified his theology by psychology. His own personal experiences of mysticism he interpreted as proof of Election; he knew that most of his fellow citizens had had no such experiences; he concluded that, even as Calvin had said, they were damned. He felt justified, therefore, in insisting on Conversion as the necessary preliminary to church membership.

In consequence of an earlier revival in his parish of Northampton, his attention had been drawn to the little-understood psychology of the awakening soul, and with the detachment of the scientist he set himself to study

the problem. The terrors aroused by his minatory sermons provided his clinical laboratory with numerous cases of abnormal emotionalism. Day after day he probed and analyzed and compared, until as a result of his close studies in vivisection, he became a specialist in the theory of conversion. . . . Like a modern psychologist, he was at enormous pains to chart the successive steps in the miraculous transformation.[8]

The metaphysical system of Calvinism was built with such inevitable logic that "it *couldn'* break daown" but it might die of pernicious anæmia. Edwards refilled its hardening arteries, however, with genuine blood drawn direct from the patients in his laboratory, and gave the old religion a new century of life.

But strong as its hold might be on the masses, the classes were susceptible to reason; and if Calvinism gave in a single point, it collapsed in all. Inevitably the hot-headed deism of Tom Paine and his friends cleared the ground of many a superstition; but deism was too notorious and it denied too much for the comfort of the populace at large. Universalism, established by the Rev. John Murray at Gloucester, Massachusetts, in 1774, demolished the Angry God above and his Hell beneath. Unitarianism, which boldly cut the Gordian of the Trinity,

[8] Vernon Louis Parrington, *The Colonial Mind*, p. 160, New York, 1927.

and shook itself almost entirely loose from scholastic theology, had a longer history. It was manifesting in New England by 1700; by 1718, Dr. Gay of Hingham was openly preaching it; by 1740, a number of Calvinist ministers had changed their faith; in 1782, King's Chapel, at Boston, shifted from Episcopalian to Unitarian, thereby involving itself in a famous lawsuit; in 1796, as a result of the influence of Dr. Priestley, a Unitarian church was founded at Philadelphia; by the end of the century, most ministers in and near Boston looked favorably upon it; and when in 1804 the Hollis Professorship of Divinity at Harvard was given to Dr. Ware, after a sharp warfare of pamphlets, Harvard became the educational center for the Unitarian ministry. Thereafter, the leading families of New England were chiefly Unitarian, though the Orthodox fought hard in their retreat; and by 1855, the " irreligious " Dr. Holmes was able to write his fable of the deacon's masterpiece, the Wonderful One-Hoss Shay, and its spectacular disappearance. " Logic is logic. That's all I'll say."

The common sense and the intuitive knowledge of mental reality which had abolished witchcraft had also abolished Calvinism.

But the Americans were not content with a

merely rational and ethical religion devoid of all metaphysics. Common sense indeed had cleared away the weeds and brambles of centuries; yet all that work was negative and destructive. Deity was undiabolized, but not annihilated. The sweet and subtle mysticism of Jonathan Edwards still survived, for that was real, though his logic-built Hell had vanished. And at this point, Swedenborg gave new strength to spiritual eyes; he opened a new path into the mental world, which all might tread. Thus he was adding to knowledge by experience, not diminishing it by rejecting fable. And to his banner flocked the pioneers of the soul.

Swedenborg's great strength lay in his powers of introspection, which revived consciousness of subjective experience. His fantastic accounts of conversations with angels and trips to Hell are transparent symbols: one cannot possibly read them without puzzling out and defining for oneself various states of soul. These Memorable Relations are the records of shrewd insight into human motivation and the history of ideas.

In a new land eager for fresh and authentic accounts of the soul, his works were read and understood widely. His doctrine of Universal Correspondence pulled the universe together and shed light

on the Scriptures; while his proclamation of the possibility of opening an interior gateway into eternity (the mental world, of which this material world was but the expression and symbol) was an invitation to enter and check up for oneself. Hitherto all dreams of night and day had been considered idle nonsense; now they might be valid.

His works were being published in both Boston and Philadelphia during the seventeen nineties; his influence lasted until the evolutionists began concentrating the attention of science upon matter instead of mind. The development of Sam Warren, hero of *Shore Acres,* was characteristic of many a young radical:

> Sam Warren was *raised* respectable enough. His father and mother were Presbyterians. . . . Now look at 'im. First he read Emanuel Swedenborg, an' he was a red-hot Swedenborgian — then he got hold of Spencer an' Darwin an' a lot o' them kind o' lunatics. . . . D'yeh remember thet free lecture he gave with the magic lantern in the school house, on evolution 's he called it? . . . Now he's come out as a home-a-pathic physician. He ain't a doctor — he's a pheesycian.

But before Spencer and Darwin and Huxley, popular science itself was directed towards the mind instead of the body. " Baconian " materialism was

supposed to be dangerous, dull, and unprofitable. It dealt presumably with details and not with essentials. Meanwhile, the reading of the character in the features (popularized by Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy, for the Promotion of the Knowledge and the Love of Mankind*) or in the bumps of the skull (Phrenology was once endorsed as a genuine science) was one of many attempts to pass from matter to mind, discovering the latter by its marks upon the former. Mesmerism, respectably rebaptized as Hypnotism, furnished experimental proof of the magical powers of the will, and promised to open the gate that so many followers of Swedenborg could not even find. Hypnotic healing, and later the faith-healing of Dr. Quimby and Mrs. Eddy, proved the subjection of body to mind, and soon denied the very existence of the former. Subjective Spiritualism was started in 1846 by Andrew Jackson Davis, and objective Spiritualism by the Fox sisters two years later. Then the cooler, critical spirit of science produced William James, psychologist.

Such was the dominant trend of the times; needless to add, it had its effect on literature. German Transcendentalism, which had found only a few, isolated disciples in England, swept New England. The soil had been well prepared for its Idealism.

Emerson, no longer " interested " in the sacraments, stepped down from the Unitarian pulpit once Cotton Mather's; Hawthorne looked back on Calvinism as good material for the novelist; Thoreau built his hut by Walden Pond, to get a chance to write close to reality; Judd fled from the orthodoxy of Yale to the heresy of Harvard, and added Beauty to the Theological Virtues. And Emily Dickinson, their belated sister, would not go to church. The New England Transcendentalists made a fresh start with the universe; they considered their narrow life profoundly — and discovered that it was profound. " Mind is the only reality, of which man and all other natures are better or worse reflectors," Emerson proclaimed in his lecture on *The Transcendentalist* (January, 1842). " Nay, be a Columbus to whole continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought " was the conclusion of Thoreau's *Walden* (1854).

But the inner world is not wholly the glorious Eden that they thought it. The interior gate may open upon Hell instead of Heaven. Already, when Thoreau issued his call to discovery, there were those who had come to grief on just such voyages.

Poe had been one of them. His eye had first been caught by a class of " fancies " of exquisite delicacy

which were not thoughts, and to which at first he found it absolutely impossible to adapt language. He was most aware of these fancies when he was on the very brink of sleep, with the consciousness that he was so.[9]

> They who dream by day are cognizant of many things which escape those who dream only by night. In their gray visions they obtain glimpses of eternity, and thrill, in awaking, to find that they have been upon the verge of the great secret. In snatches, they learn something of the wisdom which is of good, and more of the mere knowledge, which is of evil. They penetrate, however rudderless or compassless, into the vast ocean of the "light ineffable," and again, like the adventurers of the Nubian geographer, *agressi sunt mare tenebrarum, quid in eo esset exploraturi.*[10]

But such seas give up their dead, when the true magician weaves his spells.

Melville was another who set out on such voyages; *Mardi, Moby-Dick,* and *Pierre* are his three logs. Today we are beginning to verify his and Poe's discoveries; we can guess at the nature of the horrible whiteness which sucked Gordon Pym down to his death at the South Pole — the same whiteness which, incarnate as Moby-Dick, rose from the depths and all but killed Ishmael.

[9] *Marginalia:* "Dreams." [10] *Eleonora.*

These two were blessed with voices; they told what they could. They spoke, however, for many another whose bark was wrecked before it got out of sight of harbor. Throughout the history of American poetry there have always been solitary figures stumbling through the marshes that foot Parnassus. Half insane with anguish, racked by stifled passion, they were excluded from the literary circles of the successful; and thus deprived of the friendly criticism which is always necessary, they lost their chance at immortality which they often deserved before their accepted brethren. Their history is usually the same. Calvin soured their childhood; Byron unbalanced their youth; and when in their manhood they actually encountered tragedy, they fell into a confirmed and Gothic pessimism. They strutted in black mantles and wetted copious handkerchiefs. They cultivated temperaments. Never questioning the rightness of Things As They Are, these "enthusiasts" could believe only that they were unique beings suffering under some Curse. Poor Satanists! Poor erotomaniacs! Always they worshiped to the end the gods who eventually slew them. Hypersexual, they still adored Purity, and frantically repented of their pathetic missteps. Damned, they still cried aloud to Christ. Their only reaction was complaint, not re-

volt. Never did they accept Evil as their Good, and spitefully triumph in their Hells. They were not big enough to be Byrons or Baudelaires.

Let us be gentle to their memory; for they suffered. One of them spoke for all, when he wrote of himself:

> His sensibility is a curse; his eccentric thoughts wander far from those of the world's dwellers; and when the elysian dream of imagination has passed, his mind sinks into gloom and despair.[11]

This is the highroad to madness.

By now it should be clear what one of the dominant impulses of American literature has been: an awareness of psychological fact, inherited from the seventeenth century, and given fresh life by several tendencies of later times. A network of causes has led to a single result: exploration of the mental frontier.

From Jonathan Edwards to Hawthorne is but one step; from Hawthorne to Melville is but one more; and yet but one more from Melville to Freud. Again: from Edwards to Channing, Judd, and the other Unitarians is but one step; and from Judd we step directly to Melville. A third stick of the fan may be

[11] Sumner Lincoln Fairfield: *Poems and Prose,* Philadelphia, 1841, Vol. I (no more published).

traced from Edwards to Charles Brockden Brown, and from him to Poe. "These relentless psychologists," writes Lewis Mumford of Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville,[12] "were far more deeply immersed in the American scene than any of the writers who succeeded them in the next generation, however closely Bret Harte and Howells and Mark Twain met the English prescription for natural character and robust health."

But Edwards was not the only center of action; the impulses ray outward from Swedenborg also. From Swedenborg through Emerson to Emily Dickinson[13] is a progression too natural to need further comment. Less well-known, yet much more spectacular, was the progression from Swedenborg through the visions of Andrew Jackson Davis and the "inspired" poetry of Thomas Lake Harris to all of subjective Spiritualism. Henry James, Sr., was a Swedenborgian minister; and in his two sons, William and Henry, Jr., we can behold clearly how the stream was divided and changed. Given the Swedenborgian habit of thought, and developing it in the world of science, you have William James, the philosopher and psychologist; though indeed, some-

[12] *Herman Melville*, New York, 1929, p. 229.

[13] Her "Goal" was republished in the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Individualpsychologie* for 1928, p. 382.

thing of the same tendency had been derived from Edwards by Thomas C. Upham, the author of *The Interior Life* and several college textbooks on the mind. Perhaps the step from Swedenborg to the society novels of Henry James, Jr., may seem surprising. Yet, given the Swedenborgian habit of mind, and developing it in the social world, you have his novels.

Americans, as a rule, have a marked flair for sizing up social situations — a flair originating in their psychological knack, and necessarily developed in the fluid American society, where there are no outward symbols of rank, and where neither a person's clothes nor his grandfather indicates what he may be. According to Miss Rebecca West, in her amusing comparison of Chicago and Russia,[14] the " addiction to self-consciousness and self-analysis " is universal in the Middle West; even the Chicago policemen are experts at it: " they will give the most subtle and exact evidence about the psychological situation in each case," though they are deplorably inexact about the facts. Henry Adams once complained about the same situation in Boston.[15]

Americans, consequently, are constantly horrified

[14] Preface to *Selected Poems of Carl Sandburg,* New York, 1926, pp. 19–22.
[15] *The Life of George Cabot Lodge,* Boston, 1911, pp. 8–9.

by European inability to distinguish between one kind of American and another. It was this horror that started Henry James, Jr., on his career. He specialized in the subtler, unspoken situations between individuals, or different social levels, or different nations. In his wake have followed Henry Adams, Edith Wharton, and various others, of whom I shall name only the latest — Thornton Wilder.

There are many other manifestations of this intuitive knowledge of the depths of being, which I shall omit, for fear of wearying the reader: such writers as Bird, Whitman, Stockton, and Crane; and a thousand freaks of religion. If I have clarified somewhat this one side of the American soul, and its numerous causes and effects, I must be satisfied.

Yet, after all, movements are incalculable, untraceable affairs. A *Zeitgeist* creeps invisibly over a continent; suddenly, here and there, isolated beings begin plucking the new thoughts out of the thin air. It is as though the branches of some high, spiritual tree, heavy with fruit, had drooped within reach of certain hands.

Thomas Holley Chivers, M. D., of Georgia, far from New England, was one of those who were first aware of the new *Zeitgeist*. He, too, had his eyes

turned inward; and by means of his fidelity to psychological fact, he was blindly reaching up for the tendencies afloat in the atmosphere of a new world. Much of the fruit he gathered was green, and some of it was rotten; but that was the fault of his intelligence, not of his genius. Knowing that they came from a higher world, Chivers did not subject them to the stern scrutiny which makes the perfect poem. We must pick and choose in his rare volumes; much there is trash; but amongst the trash are a few amazing specimens of rare species that deserve salvation.

Chapter II

A Poet Born to Georgia

GEORGIA, named after George II, was the most southerly of the Thirteen Original States and the last to be founded. Originally it had been designed as an English wedge between French Louisiana and Spanish Florida; it served also to prevent negro slaves from fleeing unhindered from the Carolinas to the freedom which was guaranteed them by the Spanish Crown if they ever reached Florida. To attract colonists, Georgia was advertised as an asylum for European debtors ("worthy but indigent classes") and persecuted Protestant sects. Pope, Thomson, and Goldsmith all celebrated the project.

James Edward Oglethorpe, whose life Dr. Johnson never got round to writing, procured the charter in 1732 and founded Savannah, the first settlement, in 1733. He met with no difficulties from the natives, for though Georgia had been originally part of the vast domains of the Creeks and the Chero-

kees, the tribes were now sadly diminished,[1] as a result of Indian susceptibility to drink, disease, gunpowder, slave-traders, and miscellaneous enemies red and white. The chief evidences of their former greatness were the strange mounds which hinted at an ancient and mighty civilization due, it seemed, to some mysterious and vanished race. The Creeks in the west, however, and the Cherokees in the northwest of the territory, were still powerful tribes, and to their menace was added that of the Seminoles in Florida.

The whites first settled along the coast and along the border of South Carolina. Lutherans came in droves; Jews were not uncommon. The Wesleys appeared in 1736, but learned more than they taught; it is amusing to note that the founders of a sect which later attained such power in Georgia were unpopular in person. Yet John Wesley, in his brief visit, started what is now the oldest Sunday school in the world, and wrote his first book of hymns, which was published, however, at Charleston. By 1750 the main stream of immigration, however, was

[1] "In De Soto's time (about 1540), for example, the coast of Georgia was certainly supporting at least five thousand population. At the time of Oglethorpe's arrival, two centuries later, for fifty miles around what is now Savannah, there was only one little settlement of one hundred Indians." (W. C. MacLeod: *The American Indian Frontier,* New York, 1928, p. 257.)

seeping in not from Europe but from Virginia and the Carolinas.

At first the colony did not prosper. British law forbade the export of the natural products of the colony and tried to encourage silk and other products foredoomed. Georgia was the only one of the original thirteen colonies to receive aid from the British government. In 1753 it became a royal province, and thereafter prospered so exceedingly that when the Revolution came, its sentiments were divided fairly equally. But the British seizure of Savannah in 1778 and of Augusta (named for the mother of George III) in 1779 increased the national sentiment; the battle of Kettle Creek broke the power of the local Tories; and by 1780 the Americans were completely in power.

The opening decade of the nineteenth century increased the influx of whites. A report of gold in the mountains lured many adventurers. Rich cotton-lands appealed to the far-sighted gentleman farmer with his negro slaves. Vacant stretches of woodland tempted squatters. The extensive forests offered a refuge for the outlaws from other states. Villages arose here and there, and grew rapidly into towns around a nucleus composed of the court-house with its cupola and bell, the tavern with its sign, the jail,

and the smithy. Yankee peddlers, Irish schoolmasters, itinerant preachers like the bearded Lorenzo ("Crazy") Dow, appeared and disappeared. The "Georgia Guard," or the state troops, were organized to preserve peace; in case of Indian raids, the citizens formed train-bands — men as expert as their enemies with rifles, bowie knives, and the flung hatchet. When there were minor offenders not worth the attention of these august bodies, the "Regulators" (that is, an impromptu gathering of right-minded citizens) were ready to apply "Lynch's Law," which is (or was) a lively ride upon a rail out of town, where the victim was merrily left in a briar-patch or a mud-puddle.

As the towns grew into cities, in such a seething society the upper strata perforce developed a strict code of convention which today may seem to us in part excessively decorous and in part vastly romantic. The cities also developed their own amusements: horse-races, tea-parties, dances, and theaters; which replaced the bucolic sports of gander-pullings, shooting-matches, and barbecues. In vain did the orthodox thunder against such amusements. Any "levity" [2] to them was a sure sign that one had forgotten

[2] Thus Miss Caroline E. Smelt of Augusta, Ga., who died in her seventeenth year (1817), "never countenanced or descended to levity," according to her biographer, Moses Waddel, D.D. (p. 22 and passim — I quote from

God at least momentarily; and every moment ought to be devoted to his glory. The mixture of odd sects that was originally characteristic of Georgia had virtually disappeared; the spiritual battlefield had been swept by the mighty conflict of the Methodist and Baptist churches. The Methodists were the more spectacular with their orgiastic camp-meetings; the Baptists were the more dignified and dull. But both agreed that Conversion and Death were the two greatest events of life; the first opened the way to Salvation and the second to Eternity; and as infant mortality was exceedingly high, both sects specialized in edifying death-beds and the black pomp of funerals.

Among the others pressing into Georgia was Thomas Holley Chivers, grandfather of the poet. He had emigrated to Virginia in the middle of the eighteenth century,[3] then had followed the stream

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the third edition of her *Memoirs,* Charlestown, 1822). This miserable little prig, who burst into tears at being forced to go to dancing-school, and always wanted to leave tea-parties early, made a virtue of her anæmia and her unsociability; had a glorious death-bed, which athletes could hardly have survived; and got her *Memoirs* endorsed by many a minister.

Thus also the editor of Marion Albina Bigelow's gloomy *Northern Harp* (New York, 1854) assures the public that the poetess "is wholly incapable of levity, and the reader will find nothing of it in any of her productions" (*Preface,* p. 4). Gloom was not an exclusively Southern state of mind; it was Baptist.

[3] According to George E. Woodberry (*Century Magazine,* January, 1903,

of population southward. His son, Colonel Robert Chivers, in 1806 married a Miss Digby, reputed to be a descendant of the famous English family; her parents are supposed to have resided in Pennsylvania or Virginia before they went to Georgia. The exceptionally fertile soil led the Colonel to start a cotton-farm and mill a few miles south of Washington, Georgia. Washington, incorporated the year before, was the first town to be named after the great president, and the first place in Georgia where cotton was cultivated. "Washington! There is not a town in the State around whose majestic old homes there clusters more of architectural beauty, of social charm, of intellectual culture, or of historic renown," wrote one admirer.[4] Another authority, evidently with an orthodox cast, remarked that it was noted for "wealth, hospitality, skepticism, and wickedness."[5] Presumably the town was a trifle more civilized than its neighbors. Near it, in the midst of an oak-grove on the state road, the Colonel

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p. 437; and again in his life of Edgar Allan Poe, Vol. II, p. 379), the grandfather had come "in the middle of the seventeenth century"; but this would place about a century and a half between his emigration and his son's marriage.

[4] Lucian Lamar Knight: *Georgia's Landmarks, Memorials and Legends,* Atlanta, Ga., 1914, Vol. II, p. 1050.

[5] John Donald Wade: *Augustus Baldwin Longstreet,* New York, 1924, p. 111.

built "Digby Manor," — a house of logs that might seem primitive to us today, but was then the ample residence of a rich man.

And here, in raw America, on October 18, 1809, was born his first child, Thomas Holley Chivers.[6] Poe had been born on January 19 of the same year, just nine months before the man whose story was to be linked so curiously with his own. The same year also saw the births of Lincoln, Darwin, Tennyson, Holmes, Elizabeth Barrett, Chopin, Gladstone, Proudhon, and Mendelssohn.

Thomas Holley Chivers was the eldest of the Colonel's three sons and four daughters. His child-

[6] Chivers's daughters told Griswold that their father was born in 1807, and this was the accepted date until Professor Harrison discovered in *Conrad and Eudora* a poem "To My Precious Mother, on the Anniversary of my Twenty-fifth Year," which was "written at Philadelphia, October 18, 1834." (Owing to a misprint, this reference could not be verified by later scholars, who examined the wrong volume.) Chivers's "occasional" pieces were, for the most part, actually written on the occasion; and Professor Harrison's corrected date is confirmed by references in two other poems: "my four and twentieth year" ("Hymn to Death," in *Conrad and Eudora,* dated "West, August, 1834") and "In this frail world. . . . Which I have occupied one score of years" ("Lament of Youth" in *The Path of Sorrow,* written, according to the Preface, in 1828 or 1829). His date of graduation (1830) also tends to confirm 1809 as the year of his birth.

Against this date is a fact mentioned by Woodberry: 1807 is given as the birth-year in a sketch of Chivers's life "written apparently by himself late in life." Moreover, his tombstone gives his age at death (1858) as fifty-two years (i.e., in his fifty-second year).

In view of this confusion, Chivers's earlier, published statements seem preferable. Towards the end of life, people frequently suppose themselves older than they are; and anybody who has worked on genealogy knows that tombstones are almost as shaky on dates as on reputations. And it is quite possible that Chivers antedated his birth, half by accident, in an attempt to establish his seniority over his great rival, Poe.

hood was ideally happy. He was a boy in a virgin country, living close to nature in a handsome " cottage " surrounded by oaks and pines. It had lawns, graveled walks, an avenue of populars, with plenty of honeysuckle and eglantine. In the yard was the well with its long sweep and a cedar bucket; around it grew four oaks in a square so perfect that it seemed as though they must have been planted by man; here " the scullion suspended the butter." The boy swung in the grapevines by the spring, climbed the trees, chased an old speckled goose, shot at robins with his mulberry cross-bow. He planted a China tree by the state road.[7] His mother, of course, was the center of the household, combing her little girls' hair in the open air, directing the servants, and teaching the children their letters at her knee. The boy liked reading out of doors while the wind drowsed in the pines. There were plenty of house-servants to do his bidding, and plenty more negroes singing in the fields. Altogether, young Thomas was waited on, looked after, and probably spoilt not a little; he was very innocent and intensely happy. " The two angels, Love and Adoration, were the twin Sisters who went hand in hand with him through the Eden of his Youth, gathering the pur-

[7] These details are taken from " Retrospect " (*Path of Sorrow*), " To a China Tree " and " To My Harp " (*Nacoochee*).

ple Violets of Heaven." [8] All his life he adored his home; when he inherited it, he kept it as his seat, in spite of his preference for life in the North. Many of his poems were written at " Oaky Grove " (as he renamed the estate) or at " Villa Allegra," his own house in the town itself; and when, towards the end of his life, he moved to Decatur, he called his place there " Villa Allegra."

He seems to have been very fortunate in his parents. One may suspect that they spoiled him; but he had no such suspicions. He always spoke gratefully of his father; as for his mother, he never wearied of writing poems in tribute to her. Both parents looked indulgently upon him, brought him up to be a Southern gentleman, and stood by him faithfully in the troubles close ahead.

But if he loved his parents, he genuinely adored God. Brought up in the stern Baptist faith, he lost all sense of levity, but enjoyed life thoroughly, none the less; and though he mentions Hell in his writings, it is only a literary convention, while Heaven was more real to him than Georgia. He believed quite naturally in that higher world and in the ocean of God's omnipotent love. Whatever sorrows there might be upon earth (and later he had his share of them), he was always convinced that they

[8] From "Faith," a poem written in 1827; quoted by Woodberry, *Century Magazine,* January, 1903.

are more then atoned for by the bliss which is eternity.

But families cannot always be happy. While he was yet a boy, a sister (whom in his poems he names Adaline) died; he stood beside her bed when the gates of heaven were opening, and watched the agony:

> . . . Oh! I never shall forget that eye! —
> That dying eye! which closed upon her sight; yea,
> Closed communion with this world! I heard her
> Bid her mother come, and see her last! Oh,
> Wisdom of Eternity! exalt my
> Thought, to tell of grief and wo! expand my
> Soul, to realize the dying thrill! Great
> God! is this benevolence in nature's
> Laws? — God of truth! upon her cheek I saw
> The shadow of an inward strife, and, on
> Her breast, I saw caparisoned, both life
> And death, — the struggle was, to marry death
> To immortality — the crown, the boon
> Of heaven! and, the bride, the embrace of that
> Bliss in uninterdicted love, that shines through
> All eternity. Upon the icy
> Breast of love, I saw the rose and lilly
> Stand at intervals, then fade away, like
> Candles glimmering in the midnight glory
> Of a morn that has no eve beyond it! [9]

But even in this horrible moment, the proof of another world appeared.

[9] "On the Death of Adaline" (*The Path of Sorrow*, pp. 18–19).

I heard her words in sickly tone, wooing
My ear, and urging me to listen to
Her greedy converse with the angel of the Lord!
Which stood beyond the shore of time; and yet,
She saw her with an eye, that looked beyond
The realm of sublunary things. Oh! what
A magnifying camera obscura
To the soul. . . .

Her
Eye, unfettered as to distance, — looked afar,
And on a gentle summit, where the Lord came
Down, to give her his embrace, — as she, with
Badge of virtue in her hand, ascended
With the Angel of the Covenant, from
The vale beneath — there, she saw a holy
Harp! She saw a harp — Oh, dying sister!
How can I emblem that I never saw? how
Can a brother's words depict that which he
Only saw reflected from the mirror
Of your infant soul? Yes — She saw a Harp!
And on the front, she saw a stone, which glory,
In its brightness, could not emblem! — a stone,
Which came from out the mines of heaven! — a stone,
Picked up by one of God's own stewards — faithful
To his trust, beside the wine press, bordering
On Jehovah's throne, in Eden's garden!
And on the apex of this stone, she saw
An Iris ever varient — ever
New, converging all its rays in focus
Of eternity. . . .[10]

[10] "On the Death of Adaline" (*The Path of Sorrow,* pp. 20–21).

It was a vision, a glimpse across the abyss. Chivers never doubted the truth of what she saw; nor did he ever lose the sense that just beyond, somewhere, was this other world, infinitely more glorious than the world into which we were born.

A more terrible adventure awaited him, however: love.[11] The ideal maiden, " Angeline," appeared. He was but a boy; she was yet younger.

> Their loves were mutual,—they paid their vows
> Sincere; and while her head thus leaned upon
> His breast, she heard loud waves within his heart,
> His bosom's lord of life; and on fond tablet
> Of his heart, moved by the carmine stream, dear
> Stream of all his joys, he stamped his tender
> Vows and assignations, with the ink, drawn
> From the fountain head of life and love. . . .

In absence, she haunted his dreams; at last he stole from his home to marry her, " and all approved the joy." Then the disaster fell; but not as it usually does. Friends of hers, led by one in particular, spread slander about him, until he woke one morning, to find that she had left him forever. She would not even let him see his child.

The blow fell with crushing force on this lad not

[11] The details of this affair are taken from the unmistakably autobiographical poems in his first book. The main facts are substantiated by his will, in which he cuts off his first wife and her daughter with a dollar each.

yet twenty. He still loved her; he believed that she loved him; but nothing could be done. His parents stood by him; but he could not endure the scandal. Though his own conscience was clean, he fled from his home.

At first he even thought of leaving America, but eventually he got admitted to the medical department of Transylvania University, Lexington, Ky.[12] In 1828 he registered for one course; in the following year for two. Meanwhile the boy, physically shattered and desperately homesick, was endeavoring to forget the wreck of his life. How similar his plight to that of Byron's! Byron had also been left by his wife and forbidden to see his child. And like Byron, Chivers would perpetuate his misery in verse. Indeed, he was amazed to find that his sufferings "woke an immortality of song."[13]

Though he vowed to love the faithless one forever, yet he noted that he became callous; he despised the whole crew of her friends, and could forget them in the future. Then the anguish would return, and he would fight the fight all over. Still, he had learned the meaning of suffering and the

[12] He had been prepared probably at a Georgia preparatory school. His tutor was almost surely the Mr. Thomas Lacey, on whose death he wrote an elegy, which appeared in his first book.

[13] *The Path of Sorrow*, p. 108.

value of it; his life was broadened and deepened. He could write! — that would make his parents feel proud of him once more; that would justify his existence in the world. He could endure; on heaven he cast his cares. And God answered.

> My
> Soul is drunk with thy omnipotence. There
> Seems to be, within my very life, a
> Longing after immortality, in love.
> There is an ideal something in my soul,
> Which swells my bosom's lord nigh bursting! what
> Is it? — from the very morning when I
> Woke a child of sorrow, I have espoused
> The cause of nature; and I love the world —
> Not that I feel adhesiveness for man —
> For sinful man! but, there is a glory
> In its contemplation, which pervades my
> Very being. . . .
> My soul is but a handful of thy love.[14]

Of course he wrote poetry; everybody was writing poetry. The call had gone forth; the whole nation responded.

> In glory and renown these regions rise,
> But ah! one precious gift high Heav'n denys:
> To make thy fame, America, complete,
> The Muse of Poesy thy sons should greet.[15]

[14] *Ibid,* pp. 112–113.

[15] Samuel Low: *Poems,* New York, 1800, Vol. I, p. 133. The cry, once raised, continued, even after everybody had taken to publishing. William

Crying out that America had no bards, everybody rushed into print. A thousand mocking birds struck up, imitating nightingales whose haunt did not happen to be American. Poetry was now a necessary accomplishment of the gentle world; and into each other's albums youths and maidens recorded (in impeccable copper-plate script) undying sentiments and attachments of an ardor which would startle today's flaming youth. Soon it became quite proper to publish in the papers and magazines, under initials or pen-names; the editors encouraged the cult with columns of advice to correspondents; and many a Miss Jones thrilled to see her name in public print (genteelly transmogrified into "Ione S——") with some such note as this: "*The Birth of the Butterfly* is alas! unprintable! But send us more of your work!!!" Finally the most successful broke from their incognitos, published whole volumes

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Clifton, in his "Poetical Epistle to Gifford" (*Poems, Chiefly Occasional,* New York, 1800) pleaded that a few over here had the "soul of song." In 1820, the handsome Joseph Rodman Drake, who died aged 25 at New York of consumption during an eclipse of the moon, left among his papers a poem "To a Friend," in which he cried: "Are there in America no scenes to touch the poet's soul?" MacDonald Clarke's neurotic *Elixir of Moonshine* (New York, 1822, p. 128) raises the same cry; also N. Bradshears' *Poems* (Washington, 1826, p. 35):

> Why sleeps Columbia's muse, in sloth supine,
> Why droops the genius of our native clime?

(because she had not yet bought a rhyming dictionary?); see also Rufus Dawes's *Geraldine* (New York, 1839): "Where are thy bards, America?" Etc.

(which now paid the publishers well), and the Early American Parnassus was achieved!

It was the lull between Freneau and Bryant, the gap between century and century; or, to define it positively, it was the American Rococo, full of darts, doves, and charming attitudes. To read those Gift-Book poets today is like musing over pressed flowers. Just so were they sentimental; just so have they faded. Or perhaps they are better compared to the wax blossoms that once adorned the "best rooms." The quaint and artificial charm is quite similar, quite as naïvely fascinating — at the distance of a century.

What a world they lived in! Home was the center of their universe. As one frustrate bard (Frederick Knight of Rowley, Mass.) sang:

> The flowers are my pictures, the trees are my books;
> The spring is my mirror, the sun is my watch;
> My musicians the breezes, the birds, and the brooks,
> My tapers the stars, o'er my Cottage of Thatch.[16]

And to these cottages everywhere bent the silken sylphs of the air bearing rainbow garlands. In the tiny gardens, the bud of the moss-rose was wooed by the zephyr or the sunbeams, while the butterfly

[16] [Anon.]: *Thorn Cottage,* Boston, 1855, p. 18.

taught its solemn lesson of immortality. Beyond the fence lay the velvet meadows threaded by silvery brooks which issued from the crystal fountains common to sylvan nooks; in the vicinity dwelt fays clad in flower petals clasped with rare gems. To the east might be seen Old Ocean, beneath whose blue bosom lived the nymphs in grottos of pearl, coral, amber, or painted shells. Under the ebon veil of night, these nymphs rose to sport on the billows; and often were they glimpsed by stray poets — very often!

But mightier powers than these harmless and charming elementals were abroad. Among the men and women of Columbia stalked the immortal Virtues, each crowned, as it were, with a capital letter. There was Hope, star-gazing in her Grecian gowns; there was Faith leaning upon her anchor; and Charity with two doves in her bosom. There were also Night with moon-braided locks; Spring shaking flowers from her lap; Pleasure with floating locks and a laugh which occasionally became "hectic." And everywhere, before Beauty in her bower knelt Genius, whose unvariant symbol was the gale-swept Æolian harp.

Life was ribbed with rainbows, flooded with flowers, and made melodious by sylvan songsters. Only

the gilded "saloons" of Fashions were to be scorned; the rest deserved nothing worse than pity. Beneath was no Hell; above was the Paradise of the Peris.

Can we not forgive the inhabitants of this gentle Arcadia for believing that their sentiments and platitudes were the basis of life? Their music-box sentiments were those of eighteenth-century Europe, but purified of *fin-de-siècclisme* by the Utopian breezes of the New World. And who could resist that warm sensation of infallibility? Not they. We are still too near them to appreciate them. Suffice it, then, that in their Indian Summer, these transplanted sentiments became morals — and good morals, too; so good, in fact, that they eventually grew into truisms. But if they bore the modern reader, he need merely delete the last stanza of each of these poems, and he will discover artificial bucolics that still can charm.

Yet the fact cannot be suppressed that all this rural sentiment in Della Cruscan cadence lacked two things: honesty (that is, individuality) and technique. There seemed to be a general belief that rhyming was very difficult. One had but to attain that, and subscribe to a brief creed (the loveliness of nature, the holiness of the conventional emotions,

the simplicity of ethics, and the lack of any need for intellect), to achieve Parnassus.

Now Parnassus in those days was strictly a community. Its citizens all used the same small vocabulary and thought the same thoughts. Plagiarism was a word not to be found in their dictionary. One may turn over hundreds of these volumes (*crede experto*) without encountering the slightest effort towards a new perception, thought, feeling, image, rhythm, or form. Sometimes, it is true, Greekish deities achieve an ice-storm, or a whippoorwill sings from the ruins of a Gothic abbey; [17] but very seldom. The poets believed as a whole that what everybody was saying must be true — and worth saying again. Their ideal seemed to be correct sentiments at all costs, correct rhymes if possible, and a convenient approximation of accuracy; for who could misread universally recognized truths, which had merely been rephrased? As for technique, quatrains were a sufficient vehicle for any fancy of theirs, and if one wanted variety, there was always the "Sonnet," a poem of fourteen iambic pentameters. More information on the sonnet was not available; often, in

[17] As in that curious reversion, William George Caldcleugh's anonymous *The Branch* (Philadelphia, 1862, p. 80); a collection of Virgilian eclogues with American touches, done in eighteenth-century poetic diction and heroic couplets.

sheer excess of ignorance, the sonnet was made to do astounding things. Many years before Verlaine, Samuel Low stood the sonnet on its head.[18] None of Poe's sonnets is Petrarchan, Shaksperean, or Spenserian. Chivers's sonnet, "The Grave" (in *The Lost Pleiad*) is rhymed *ab* throughout. In short, the freedom popularized by Bowles lasted until the time of Longfellow and Boker, who seem to have been the first Americans of any note who really understood the sonnet.

And thus, through all this ignorance, one poet usually became wholly indistinguishable from the next in sentiment and technique. No progress had been made, because none had been attempted. None could be attempted because there was no geographical or critical center for discussion. Without critical knowledge, without individuality of any sort, the American Rococo was doomed. But at least it demonstrated the need of these two qualities, if one was to rise above the enormous mass of mediocre

[18] Low, though ignorant of classic usage, was nevertheless deliberately experimenting in the fourteen-line poem. His twenty sonnets (*Poems,* New York, 1800, Vol. II) show a great variety of form. Six are strictly Elizabethan. The 2nd and 5th sonnets place the sestet before the octave; the 3d divides the sonnet just in half, while the 11th falls into three sections of five, four, and five lines respectively. Sylvanus Dryden Phelps might also be mentioned; in his *Eloquence of Nature* (Hartford, 1842) is a sonnet "To Sarah," which is inverted; another, "There the Weary Are at Rest," is still more curious, as the first four lines are Petrarchan, the next ten Spenserian; and the last two Shaksperean! I am sure he supposed it was a sonnet.

verse then being produced.[19] Already Harvard College was collecting a group whose scholarship was to establish European traditions. Already Poe was sharpening his wits on the dullness of others. The American Rococo was merely the beginning of a wave, upon whose crest genius was to rise. From the Optimists was to come Longfellow; from the Pessimists, Poe. And Chivers, optimist by nature, pessimist by circumstance, was to unite both schools and triumph in his own way. And he did so by bringing three things which most of his contemporaries scorned: genuine emotion, a sense of musical form, and a curiosity about both.

[19] The number of volumes actually issued is so impressive as to prove, I think, that poetry was a national heritage even in those early days. But without a natural center, the art had to become national before it could produce anything of significance — the usual course of the arts in America, where they commonly suffuse the soil before a great work appears. When a sufficient body of bad work is accepted by an extensive audience, then the Poes and Whitmans discover that they can do infinitely better. Meanwhile, there seems to be nothing like a complete list of titles of early nineteenth-century American verse. What genius may be lost in that limbo, who can say?

Chapter III

Medicine, Indians, and Authorship

IN THE spring of 1830, young Chivers received his M. D. with distinction. His thesis, *Intermittent and Remittent Fevers,* was dated March 17. He had dissected corpses by day and written out his private agony in verse by night; now he was free of that mad entanglement, free of the drudgery of study, and he could face the world with the authority of a professional degree. Thereafter he invariably used those two letters after his name in signing any publication.

His new gift of verse [1] had got tired of his personal troubles; that subject was temporarily written out; and he began experimenting in more lyrical forms. On April 10, 1829, while at the University,[2] he had written " Georgia Waters ":

[1] We may guess that he versified as a boy; but if so, it promised little. He states in the *Path of Sorrow* that he first began writing when he had gone to the University after his marriage broke up. With the exception of " Faith " (quoted by Woodberry) we have nothing of his before he reached Transylvania.

[2] First published in *Nacoochee* (1837); dated in the *Georgia Citizen,* February 10, 1854; this later, corrected version is followed here.

On thy waters, thy sweet valley-waters,
  Oh! Georgia! how happy were we!
When thy daughters, thy sweet smiling daughters,
  First gathered sweet-william for me,
Then thy wildwood, thy dark, shady wildwood
  Had many bright visions for me!
For my childhood, my bright rosy childhood
  Was cradled, dear Georgia! in thee —
  Bright land of my childhood, in thee!

On thy mountains, thy green purple mountains
  The seasons were waiting on thee,
When thy fountains, thy clear crystal fountains
  Flowed sporting in gladness for me.
Now thy waters, thy sweet valley-waters
  Rush laughing in song to the Sea;
While thy daughters, thy sweet smiling daughters
  Still gather sweet-william for me —
  Dear land of my childhood, for me!

The music, the lilt, are the poem's whole excuse for being; it is the first manifestation of Chivers's cult of pure sound in verse. In spite of the trite rhymes, there is something about the poem (perhaps the sweet-william and the "green purple" mountains) that is as fresh though as flavorless as the streams it celebrates. It is also our first evidence that Chivers was escaping somewhat from the shame and obsession of his tragic marriage.

Another obsession, however, was not flung off so easily. Chivers's medical training left its mark on his brain. He knew of death now, not merely from having seen it, but as a doctor knows it. And as his Baptist faith laid great emphasis on the moment of dissolution, and as the literary fashion of the day welcomed elegies, Chivers was confirmed in his preoccupation. People did not feel then towards the dead as they do now. Today, extravagant expression of grief is thought unmanly and in rather bad form; but in Chivers's time it was equally bad form *not* to be distressed visibly and violently. We call his contemporaries morbid; they would have called us callous. Too many children died, too many "edifying" death-scenes were in the Sunday-school libraries. Nat Willis was one of the most popular poets of the day, and nearly one-fifth of his poems deal with death. Mark Twain had not yet drawn the portrait of Emmeline Grangerford in *Huckleberry Finn*.

But to Chivers, death was no matter of literary convention. It was of all things the most real, the most sure, in this world. It was no pomp of funerals; it was something he knew first-hand. And thus he came to outdo Willis: not one-fifth, but just one-third of his poems deal with this dismal subject. Again and again Chivers wrote versified accounts of

agonies which are only too photographic. The doctor dominates the poet:

> He lifted up her hand from off her breast,
> And, pressing its cold, pulseless chill with his,
> Felt the congealing shock drive back the blood
> Recurrent through his tingling veins, as if
> Each timid pulse sought rescue in his heart.
> And after he had felt her pulseless wrist,
> And prest the cold indifference of the palm
> Of her unsocial hand with his, he laid,
> With cautious ease, the stiffening fingers back.[3]

The climax of this sort of thing is to be found in his seven-page elegy on his first-born, "The Lost Pleiad," in which he details every symptom of the agony. It is horrible reading, naked of any poetic value, and far too bad even to quote — so shocking, that one's automatic refuge is in laughter. Yet (we repeat) it was the fashion of the times; and selections from this poem were published in *Arthur's Ladies' Magazine* (January, 1846).

Chivers saw nothing laughable or even morbid in such poetry. His refuge lay in religion, which had stood by his sister Adaline on her death-bed, and which had stood by him when his marriage was broken up. Adaline had seen what religion taught;

[3] "The Raising of Tabitha" (*Memoralia*).

and he constructed in his imagination a supernatural afterworld, a transfiguration of this world, the glory of which he never tired reciting. On it he lavished all his imaginative gifts. And though from a literary point of view, he fails miserably in describing death itself, many of his best poems deal with the realm of eternity.

In fact, his imagination had been so deeply impressed that soon he actually developed the power of seeing visions. He concealed this fact from the world, knowing well what reputation he would (and did) incur; but later, when he read of Andrew Jackson Davis's very similar visions, he felt called to testify; and he contributed an account of his own clairvoyance to A. J. Davis's weekly, *The Univercœlum:*

. . . I had been sick, but was now convalescent — (the Elysium of this poor life —) and was lying in the middle of my bed in the middle of the room, reading the Psalms of David, when this Vision appeared to me. I knew that God had couched my eyes to see it, for with my naked eyes I knew that I could not see a spirit; and, for fear that I was deceived, or, that it might be a *mere delusion* — I placed my hands over my eyes, but the glorious Vision still appeared to me as beautiful as before. Still doubting the truth of the Appearance — thinking, perhaps, that I *might* be deceived — I called my mother into the room, and cry-

ing out in the ecstasy of delight, I said, *"Mother! look up there upon the wall at the beautiful Angels singing and playing upon their harps!"* At which she looked up, intently, for some time, but could discern nothing. She then said, *"My dear! you are distracted! I can see nothing!"* *"Now,"* said I, *"they are gone!"* And they went away just as I have told you. When I turned my face toward the right side of the room, I saw a fountain of crystal water running down the wall, and breaking into a beautiful, musical, cooling and purifying cascade over the looking-glass. I told my mother of the Vision of the little crystal river of beautiful water, at which she smiled just as she had done at the Vision of the Angels. I then bade her go — (to satisfy her of the truth of the Vision) — and hold her hand under the glass. She did so; and I saw the living, crystal water splash down into the palm of her hand.[4]

Chivers might have laid all this to his sickness, if a decade later he had not recognized both the angels in the flesh. But that part of the story must be postponed.

It is said that he practiced medicine for a while; if so, he soon gave it up. He was a Southern gentleman, a rich man's son; he had come of age; his parents were indulgent; he was not strong; and there was no need for him to earn his living.

Still broken in health, and still shy about returning home, he determined to travel. But instead of

[4] *The Univercœlum, and Spiritual Philosopher* for December 9, 1848 (Vol. III, p. 22).

sailing for Europe, or even going north to the big cities, he turned his horse into the wilderness. We can follow his track somewhat by a scanty paper-trail of poems; and the poems of 1831, with one possible exception,[5] were written in " The West," " Beyond the Mountains," Cincinnati, and at the " Cherokee Nation."

To explain those last two words requires a page of Georgian history. White man and red man have seldom met without conflict; and the first conflicts of that nature on Georgian soil took place as far back as March 7, 1540, when Georgian Indians killed their first white man: he was a member of De Soto's expedition which was approaching the Indian village of Capachiqui. After the founding of the colony, the white population naturally developed a frontier and pressed hard to extend it. The Crown, however, proclaimed that the Indians were sovereign nations under its protection, and were not responsible to any other power. Their lands were inviolate, except by their own consent. Such a policy, though strictly just, could not be satisfactory long: the Indians were irritating neighbors; their hunting-

[5] " Lord Byron's Dying Words to Ada," first published in *Conrad and Eudora* (1834), was written according to *Virginalia,* at Oak [*sic*] Grove, Ga., on June 18, 1831. While there is no reason to doubt the date, I have frequently found the places, in this particular volume, open to suspicion.

grounds were wanted for agriculture; moreover, "thar's gold in them mountings, stranger." No colony with a sovereign nation of another race within its bosom could possibly exist and not feel the inconsistency and inconvenience of the situation.

After the Revolution, the Federal government took over the Crown's protectorate. But as the white population in Georgia had increased, the situation had become more intense. The Yazoo Frauds of 1795–1802 were the first important scandal. Then Georgia, whose boundaries had not been determined previously, relinquished all claim upon land west of her present border on condition that the Federal government buy the Indian lands and give them to the state. In 1803, the purchase of Louisiana made such a scheme feasible, as the Indians now had a place to go. The only difficulty lay in the fact that the Indians did not choose to give up the lands which the Great Spirit had bestowed upon them and their descendants forever; and there was no way of forcing the sale.

The situation was made worse by the War of 1812. Inspired by the Indian-British attacks on the Americans from Canada, and roused to frenzy by Tecumseh and his brother the fanatic Prophet, the Upper Creeks massacred the frontier settlements of

Georgia and Alabama; they were not subdued until 1814, when half their warriors were slain. Meanwhile the Seminoles, incited by the Spanish, crossed the southern border on the war-path. The Lower Creeks, however, joined the Americans.

After that, as one might suppose, the whites took every opportunity of canceling the Indian land-titles and encouraging them, by fair means and foul,[6] to move; pointing out that game was getting scarce this side of the Mississippi. But it was slow work, as the Indians were desperate and stubborn; and a decade later, Georgia felt that the Federal government was not living up to its agreement to clear the Indians out. A strong States' Right sentiment replaced the formerly strong Federal sentiment. At last, in 1825, the Georgians managed somehow to get a treaty signed by which most of the Lower Creeks (who were friendly, and understood the futility of resistance) agreed to exchange their lands for lands across the Mississippi; but there was a cry of fraud; and as the entire Creek nation had not ratified the treaty, President Adams annulled it and made another.

[6] See, for example, Rufus Anderson's *Memoir of Catherine Brown, a Christian Indian of the Cherokee Nation* (2nd ed., Boston, 1825, p. 30): "The old grey-headed man, with tears in his eyes, said he must go over the Mississippi. The white people would not suffer him to live here. They had stolen his cattle, horses, and hogs, until he had very little left."

But Georgia now declared that the first treaty should stand; and we may cut the tale short by saying that in 1832, the Upper Creeks having been decisively defeated once more, what was left of the nation was forcefully (but literally) sent west.

The ousting of the Cherokees was done more peaceably and disgracefully. They were the most civilized Indians in America. Sequoya, or George Gess, "the Indian Cadmus," had recently reduced their language to a phonetic alphabet. Parts of the Bible had been translated and published, and the Indians actually issued a newspaper in their own tongue: the *Cherokee Phœnix*, which ran from 1828 until it was forced to stop in 1834. In 1827 the Nation had organized itself, with a constitution which was recognized by the Federal government. But in the next year, two events marked the doom of their nation: the discovery of gold in their mountains and the election of the former frontiersman, Andrew Jackson, to the Presidency. Georgia refused to recognize the new Cherokee government, and declared that Georgian law should extend over the Cherokee land. President Jackson upheld Georgia; the Supreme Court upheld the Cherokees. This is not the place to detail the whole story of land-grabbing in defiance of all law; the quarrel between a young

state advantageously defining new " rights " and the Federal government which was the nominal protector of the Indians; the bribery and violence; the treaty-breaking; the white greed and red stubbornness. But the Cherokees publicly announced that, whatever might happen, they would wage no war, even on any soldiers sent to expel them. On June 1, 1830, their laws were finally canceled and those of Georgia substituted; in 1835, the soldiers suddenly appeared and, corralling them from their homes and fields, drove them in herds across the Mississippi. Their high state of culture and their pacifistic resignation but heightened their tragedy and won them wide sympathy.

There remained the Seminoles; headed by their desperate hero Osceola, once more they invaded the States. The war that followed lasted from 1835 to 1842; it ended with the removal of most of the Indians. The less said about this war, the better.[7]

What the young Chivers was doing among the Cherokees on March 10, 1831, besides writing a poem, we may never know. It is possible that he was there on some commission or embassy. But we do know that he was strongly in favor of the Indians:

[7] Some first-hand information is to be found in Major-General Ethan Allen Hitchcock's diary, *Fifty Years in Camp and Field*, New York and London, 1909.

the two words "Cherokee Nation" indicate that. For the Indian defense against Georgian aggression was the claim that they were a Nation. On that one word everything hinged. And one can hardly suppose that any Georgian would have used it unless he were thoroughly convinced of the justice of the Indian cause.

Moreover, the poem that Chivers wrote while there was "Lamorah's Death Song for his Son,"[8] — another sure proof of his sympathy for Indian heroism. He saw it, perhaps, through too romantic eyes. Ever since Montaigne, the Noble Savage had been sentimentalized; Rousseau, Chateaubriand, and Cooper had successively developed the tradition. Bird's *Nick of the Woods* had not yet been written; authors had not yet discovered that Indians might be dirty, stupid, and mean;[9] Chivers had profited little by the life around him. None the less, he was evidently picking up odds and ends of information about Indian mythology and history. His second book, *Conrad and Eudora,* contains several poems on such subjects; his third book, *Nacoochee,* con-

[8] *Virginalia,* p. 120, when it is dated. It was first published as "Neah-Emathlah" in *Nacoochee,* pp. 110–112.

[9] Ezekiel Sanford's delicious *Humours of Eutopia* (Philadelphia, 1828) was then and still remains unknown. Charles Brockden Brown's Indians are neither sentimentalized nor realistic.

tains a long tale based on a Creek myth about an Isle of Paradise; in the same volume is " Neah-Emathlah," an anecdote of " the recent difficulties with the Creek Indians "; while his long poem *Atlanta* recurs to the mysterious Isle.

None of Chivers's poems bears the date 1832. Evidently his first period of literary output was over. The tragic farce of his marriage had lost any further significance when he discovered that he had survived, and that the lady was listening to the vows of another. Now the time had come to let his friends view his literary labors and read his defense. He made a selection of the poems which he had written in those two bitter years, 1828 and 1829, at the medical school; and late in 1832 (the dedication is dated November 15) he had them printed at the press of the *Weekly Review* of Franklin, Tenn. *The Path of Sorrow, or, the Lament of Youth: A Poem* is perhaps his rarest volume; it is so rare, in fact, that no biographer hitherto has ever found a copy, and most of them do not even mention the title.[10] In the dedication, to John Rhay, Esq., of Newnan, Ga., Chivers states that he had printed only a few copies, for the perusal of his friends; and as the book is so trans-

[10] The only copy I know of was lent me by the great generosity of Mr. Robert Housum, of Cleveland, Ohio.

parently autobiographical, we may suspect that he did not give many copies away. We may suspect further that his relatives destroyed whatever copies they could lay their hands on, in an attempt to suppress any knowledge of the matrimonial fiasco.

In general, I disapprove of reading a man's life into his books; but this book was intended as autobiography and must be read so. It belongs on the same shelf with William Ellery Leonard's *Two Lives*. Both volumes are versified defenses against slander over unfortunate marriages; both, while intending to be fair, tell but one side of the story; both were privately printed (though Leonard's book later was published); and both are better autobiography than literature, as neither was written from " recollection in tranquillity," and both gain what power they have by ignoring Wordsworth's prescription.

It is embarrassing to stumble upon a boy's tears and to encroach upon a family scandal; it makes one uncomfortable to overhear the tragic groans of twenty, when a future of inevitable shame seems virtually everlasting. Chivers's book is too intimate to be thoroughly comprehensible (Leonard's is far better, as straight narrative); Chivers wrote for those who already knew the story:

> You all must know the pointed dart
> With which they sever'd that connubial tie,

he cries, sure that the whole world has heard of it.

But though Chivers was too upset to tell the story straight, and though time and again he buries some unfaceable fact in a vague metaphor of fiend or shipwreck, the progressive mental struggles of the tragedy, the psychological sequence, is fairly clear. Chivers, I believe, did not really know how much he told about himself; but his honesty and fidelity to inward fact give the book what little merit it has.

He and his wife, it seems, were happy until some false friends headed by some unnamed woman, poured small-town scandal into his young wife's ear; then she left him and forbade him even to see the child. Over and over he reiterates that his life was always pure:

> I was a youth of temperance and love,
> And gloried in the mandates of the truth.

We cannot doubt that he was a good church member, and later he always preached abstinence from tobacco and alcohol; and his lack of years testifies further in his defense.

He swears that he still loves his wife; he blames her for nothing except her credulity. But he cannot

face the town; he leaves, exiles himself even from his beloved mother (who gave him her blessing when he left), and even considers crossing "the raging main." In his misery he recalls the bliss of his boyhood, when —

> I got drunk in all the fibres of my heart —
> My soul was gorged with a bright light
> From every human being; man is a part
> Of God — the symbol of that glorious light
> Which lives beyond the sun or moon — and I
> Was wedded in my soul to nature; when first
> I saw creation's light — when first mine eye
> Beheld the sunbeams thus intrude, I burst
> Into this intellectual love — my nails —
> My very feet and hands became enamoured
> Of the world. . . .

He recalls also the supreme ecstasy of their first love. But now it is all over; he bids his wife solemnly farewell forever, since she will have it so. Yet though his life seems ruined, visions begin to haunt his bed; his sufferings are waking an immortality of song (even as with Tasso and Dante); perhaps by his pen he can redeem his fame. He knows that there is something in him that must endure. He turns to God, and discovers that the soul is only "a handful of thy love."

Another young girl appears; he is entranced. But

the law still holds him fast; they kiss and part. Then comes the news that his wife had also been attracted elsewhere; and all his latent hatred breaks forth in the worst verses of the book:

When the vows from the lips of a villian [*sic*]
  Brought tears on the cheeks I thought true,
The sight drained my heart of a million; —
  Thou art false as Jehovah is true. . . .
For things that are past, I am sorry!
  Like an eagle exultingly driven,
I rise from the ark of my glory,
  And perch on the Cedars of heaven. . . .
'Tis the last! human speech cannot curse thee,
  Such guilt for itself must atone!
If my pen were to stoop to condemn thee,
  My soul would be ever undone!
Then, why should I falter and languish?
  My pride shall be lofty as ever;
I will drag out the briars of anguish,
  And triumph forever and ever!

Eight of the eighteen poems in the book deal with his marriage; four others are also more or less autobiographical. " An Elegy " was written in memory of a tutor; " To My Mother " is a tribute of affection which closes the book. " On the Death of Adaline " is a description of his sister's death, which alternates between the seen and the unseen — between the

sickly horrors of the death-bed and the dying girl's visions of the gift of the celestial harp and of angels bathing in the River of Life. The poem is also a tribute to his father's grief, for though the author was obviously an eye-witness, he wrote in the person of his father, both in this poem and its appendage, "The Father's Tear." "What is Life?" and "What is Death?" are companion poems, the titles of which describe the poems sufficiently. "The Prophet's Dream" is a long prophecy of the coming of the Messiah, as foreseen by a Hebrew prophet. The three remaining poems, "The Siege of Vienna," "Anastasius," and "Kosciusko's Resignation," are semi-historical poems in praise of liberty.

Technically the book is also curious, though unsuccessful in its experimentation. Chivers must be given considerable credit, in those days of facile Della Cruscan quatrains, for attempting spenserians, heroic quatrains, and a new stanza-form of his own, rhymed *ababcdcdd*. Though this invention is not a great stanza, it is none the less an original experiment in the right direction of rounding out the ordinary eight-line combination of two quatrains.

His most original experimentation, however, lies in his blank verse. Dissatisfied with the monotonous

syllable-counting of Thomson's *Seasons* (the style still in vogue) and ignorant of the secret of Shaksperean and Miltonic blank verse, Chivers solved in a wholly unique method the problem of variety of cadence within a strict form. His device was simple: he counted ten syllables to the line and let the accent fall where it would. There is nothing quite like it in all the history of versification, except possibly Blake's experiments with the trimeter in *The Book of Urizen* and *The Book of Los,* and Miss Marianne Moore's elaborate stanzas in *Observations* (New York, 1924). Often Chivers's verse is nothing but prose arbitrarily divided into decasyllabics; at other times, passages of normal iambic pentameter are broken up so that the clash of the old system and Chivers's new one give a legitimate blank-verse effect.

> Where am I now? hear me, heaven! all alone!
> Alone I am — I am a wanderer! My
> Nature doth evoke me to the lonely
> Wilderness, wherein the voice of human
> Wo shall never enter — where it shall cease
> To echo to my ear! where am I? hear
> Me, my God! Have I not done as human
> Creatures do? hear me, Jehovah! for, in
> The tideless sea, where thy immensity
> Must roll, I cast my anchor. For, unto

Thee, my soul has sent its last expiring
Invocation! hear me, my Father! for
Thou hast built creation with thy hands. Thy
Wasteless rock, which hell's foul thunders cannot
Shake, shall bear the pillows of thy throne. My
Soul is drunk with thy omnipotence. There
Seems to be, within my very life, a
Longing after immortality, in love.[11]

This deliberately wrenched meter is thoroughly appropriate to the poet's tormented soul; and the persistent overflow drags one successfully on to the end of the paragraph. Though the experiment failed, the failure was intelligent.

We should also note that Chivers ignored contemporary fashions in verse by writing long poems instead of brief lyrics. In this book, the average length of a poem is over 225 lines; and the longest poem contains a total of 945 lines.

But he was not wholly original. He could not help comparing his fate to Byron's, who had also lost wife and child as a result of slander, and who had also justified himself in verse. Chivers makes much of the parallels. Not only does he use excerpts from Byron's domestic verse for mottoes; he even models his opening poem, "The Dream," upon Byron's "The Dream." Both poems are in blank verse; both

[11] "The Retrospect" (*The Path of Sorrow*, p. 112).

open with an account of the dream-world; both then proceed to recount a dream in which, though no names are mentioned, the " Boy " is frankly the poet and the " Girl " his only beloved; Byron begins each new section of his poem with " A change came o'er the spirit of my dream," while Chivers does the same, merely writing " cloud " instead of " change "; and both poems end with a prophecy of misery and an awakening. This was not plagiarism on Chivers's part: he was deliberately challenging a comparison of fates.

The faults of the book are obvious. Chivers's faults always are. He repeats favorite words and favorite images; he adds or omits feet accidentally; his rhyme-patterns sometimes are broken or confused; he pads his lines; his grammar lapses on occasion; his meaning is often obscure; he has no sense of compression or of structure, but rambles interminably; he shows no emotional restraint whatsoever; his metaphors are either very cheap or extraordinary; his punctuation and his proof-reading are terrible.

One trick of his, however, I am not sure is a fault: I mean his defiant transcending of the dictionary. Americans are usually very conservative in their use of English, except in one respect: they have in-

vented an enormous number of words. These form America's real contribution to the English language. And in this respect, Chivers is a true son of America. He uses common words in unexpected ways; he seeks out rare words; he invents sonorous words of his own. Evidently he was trying to enlarge the then all-too-narrow poetic vocabulary. On every other page one encounters such surprises as *acerbitous; congretion; dimpless; domil; dormancy; gnomon; keeling; oblectation; obsecration; orrery; pedigal; pernicity; sanguinize; sentential; shotten; ultramontane; vindiction.* Some of these may be misprints; some are in the dictionaries; some may get there yet.

In this use of words, and in his metrical experiments, Chivers aimed high and fell very short. Most first books are failures; few are so interesting in their failure. I have dwelt thus long on it to prove that in it is to be found all of Chivers in embryo. He had little to learn from Poe or anybody else, except taste and control of his medium. His later delirious meters and hypnotic words are merely improvements over his early work. His sense for the realities of the mental and the supersensuous worlds was already manifesting when he was twenty. His oratory and diffuseness, his elegiac melancholy, his mystical sensibilities

and symbolism are all to be found in *The Path of Sorrow*.

In view of his later development, I shall quote one stanza from "Let My Name Survive," which is a definite precursor of his most characteristic work:

In the wilderness there is a tree —
  In the bower there springs up a vine —
And my soul in its mystical visions can see,
  When my heart shall embrace them as mine.
Though the Bark of my glory is shivered,
  And has sunk as a rock in the wave!
Though my soul to regret and remorse is delivered —
  Yet, it never shall dig me a grave!
For my heart shall not bleed, nor my cheeks remain wet,
  But my candle shall burn, till I banish regret.

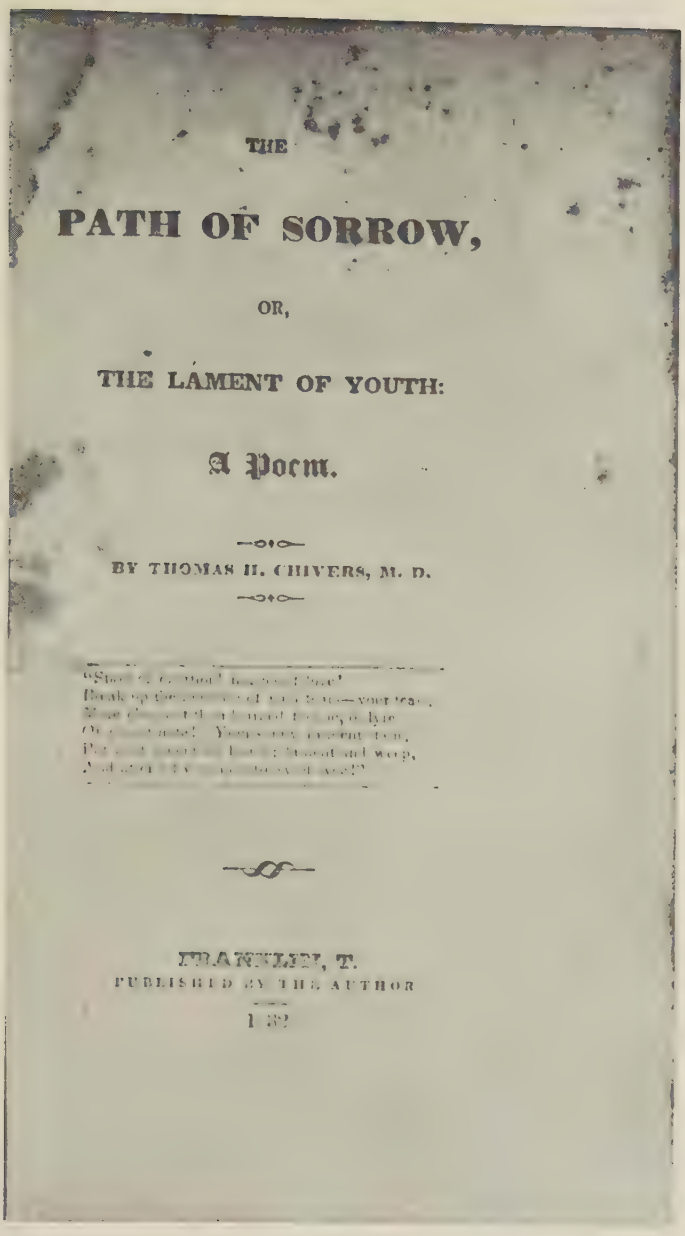
There we have his early symbolism, his confused metaphors, his punctuation and all, at their best and sometimes at their worst.

Chapter IV

"The Kentucky Tragedy"

IN 1833, young Chivers was still an exile. His wanderings led him into "the West." The love of nature which he professed in his earlier poems involved little observation of it; when he tried to describe "The Wilderness" in a poem, he wrote of fountains and mountains, thyme-enameled hills, Luna and her daughters, weeping willows, lordly oaks, and pines. The first sight of the Mississippi, however (which was to depress the exhausted Dickens so), roused something of a mystical ardor in the young American:

> Thou "*Father of Waters!*" thou million in one!
> Oh! speak from the North where thy travels begun,
> And tell me the first with thyself to unite,
> Who walked down the valleys like lovers at night,
> Till thou, with thy freedom majestic and deep,
> Bestrode like an emperor walking in sleep.
>
> And where is the strength that can sever the bands
> That bind them in union from far distant lands?


THE

PATH OF SORROW,

OR,

THE LAMENT OF YOUTH:

A Poem.

BY THOMAS H. CHIVERS, M. D.

FRANKLIN, T.
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR

1 8?

Title page of *The Path of Sorrow*

So strange in complexion, in climate, and light,
Like soldiers enlisted for Freedom to fight!
Who started their marching ere Adam was born,
And never shall stop till Eternity's morn. . . .

He wrote several other poems in the Mississippi Valley, and crossed the river to St. Louis, then but ten years a city, and just beginning a period of colossal growth.[1] The poem that Chivers wrote there describes the "Falling Garden," an ancient Indian burial place, where he saw "dark fragments, idols, — gold! —" and thousands of prehistoric bones; a sight that impressed him with the age of the continent. In general, however, the desultory poems he was tossing off were technically nothing like so interesting as his earlier poems; yet as they are still thoroughly personal, we can follow his mental development.

The freedom of spirit that had descended upon him when he learned of his wife's inconstancy has not left him. It was her fault now; he was through.

Oh! remember, thou hast left me,
'Twas not I, who "caused my doom!"
Thou, sweet ladye! thou hast reft me,
All of life, this side the tomb!

[1] In 1830, its population was 5,852; in 1840, it was 16,467.

In " Lines to Inconstancy " he declares brutally that he caught her " blushing, sighing " with all her heart at a man " drunk with bliss." He even calls her a " passion vender." The poor girl apparently had made some weak attempt at reconciliation, but had been rebuffed. " Don't ask my pardon — 'tis too late! " he cries, willing to believe the worst.

One wishes one could hear her version of the story. It might possibly have been something about a spoiled, proud boy; a jealous, meddling mother-in-law; foul rumors that seemed to be true; flight; a penitent return; rebuff; an old friend accused of being a lover; triumph of the mother-in-law; and divorce — which, however, left her the child. But we can only conjecture; no trace of her can be found today.

Meanwhile young Chivers was looking abroad with the arrogant eye of a connoisseur, and penning various verses to various misses, asking them to share his lot — but with such an air of being merely polite that even the most gallant court could never award any of them heart-balm. The most enthusiasm he betrays for one " Donna Medora," who must have had a pretty voice, for he invites the world at large to " come hear sweet Medora sing ultramontane! "

The one serious note in his short poems of this year

is to be found in those addressed to his mother. He had always been a " mother's boy," and his marital adventure had thrown him back on her unfailing affection. One poem, " To My Mother, on Hearing of her Illness," shows how close the bond was. He was far from her, in " the West "; the news made him worry so that he could not sleep;

> When late, one eve, my heart grew more elate.
> I heard, from my soul's voice, then, faint and calm,
> That God's bright angel had bestowed thee balm!

This " ministering angel . . . turned my sorrows into joyous flame." It would be interesting to learn whether or not his relief corresponded to an actual improvement in her condition; but as that evidence can hardly be procured today, we must set down the poem as Chivers's record of what we would call telepathy.

Most of his literary effort went into a drama, however. While he was at Transylvania University,[2] some one had lent him a pamphlet, the *Confession of Jereboam O. Beauchamp, who was Executed at Frankfurt, Ky., on the 7th of July, 1826.* At once, Chivers saw in it the material for a play, which he hastily sketched out before the owner of the pam-

[2] Preface to *Leoni, or the Orphan of Venice* (*Georgia Citizen,* May 17, 1851).

phlet took back his property. Chivers then finished his play at his leisure; the result was the first literary work based on the famous "Kentucky Tragedy." [3]

"No more thrilling, no more romantic tragedy did ever the brain of poet conceive than was the tragedy of Sharpe and Beauchamp," wrote Poe later.[4] And the original facts were just the right materials of which to build romance and drama.

Miss Ann Cooke and her sister were "noted Belles" and "great gamblers" who never failed to visit Frankfurt, Ky., during the legislative sessions. Colonel Solomon P. Sharp, ex-Solicitor General of Kentucky and a member of Congress, achieved her seduction. Her brothers did not see fit to avenge her dishonor, as the conventions of Kentucky allowed and even demanded; their indifference is strong evidence as to their opinion of their sister's character.

[3] For my account of the "Kentucky Tragedy," I have drawn heavily upon Professor T. O. Mabbott's edition of Poe's *Politian* (Richmond, 1923). He lists one short story, three novels and three ballads, all based on this one tragedy. Besides the plays by Poe and Chivers, he also mentions Isaac Starr Clason's lost tragedy, supposed to have been written in 1833 (Duykinck's *Cyc. Amer. Lit,* II, 263). The novels are C. F. Hoffman's *Greyslaer* (1840), and W. G. Simms's *Beauchampe* (1842) and *Charlemont* (1856).

I have also profited by Mr. Ardrey Shields McIlwaine's excellent *The Beauchamp Tragedy in American Drama,* a Master's thesis written at the University of Chicago in 1927 (Ps 3999. M2). He adds two plays to the bibliography: Charlotte M. D. Barnes Conner's *Octavia Bragaldi* (1837) and John Savage's *Sybil* (1858).

We may add Chivers's second play on the subject, *Leoni, or the Orphan of Venice.*

[4] *Graham's Magazine,* May, 1842, Vol. XX, p. 300.

Some years later, Ann and her aged mother moved from their home in Bowling Green to Simpson county, where they lived in retirement.

Near their farm was the farm of the Beauchamps. Jereboam Beauchamp, the son, was a volatile, moody youth, who had just returned from reading law at Glasgow, Ky. He was lonely in the country, without books or companions. When he heard the tale about his neighbor, he got admitted to her home on the pretext of using her library. But instead of finding a weak-witted siren, he found a dark-browed, brilliant woman smoldering with the banked fires of revenge. She fascinated him; he believed everything that she told him. At last she agreed to marry him if he would kill Colonel Sharp. At once (1821) young Jereboam — he was only nineteen — rushed to Frankfurt; challenged the Colonel to a dagger-duel; and on his refusal to fight, slapped and kicked him, and threatened to horsewhip him in the streets of the city.

Thereafter, Beauchamp kept spies watching the Colonel, so that if he might venture near Bowling Green, he could be murdered. But the wary Colonel could not be induced to go there; and in June, 1824, the couple got married: Beauchamp was twenty-two and his bride thirty-eight.

The next year, Colonel Sharp was the New Court candidate for the legislature; John U. Waring was his opponent. "Never before in the history of the state had the passions of men been raised to such an intense heat." Waring threatened Colonel Sharp's life and posted handbills far and wide publishing his version of Ann Cooke's seduction. Colonel Sharp seems to have replied with a whispering campaign to the effect that Ann's still-born bastard was a mulatto. It is possible, however, that the Colonel's enemies themselves started the story.

Sharp was elected; the legislature was to meet November 6, 1825. But the Colonel never sat; at two o'clock that morning, the maddened Beauchamp called him to his door and stabbed him to death.

Beauchamp was soon arrested; the whole country followed his trial with the greatest excitement. Evidence was juggled; exhibits disappeared; there was bribery and perjury. Eventually, however, he was condemned. The execution was fixed for July 7, 1826. Ann was allowed to share his cell the night before. She smuggled in laudanum and a sharpened case-knife, to make their mutual suicides doubly sure. The laudanum did not do its work; on reviving, they stabbed themselves. Ann succeeded in kill-

ing herself, but Beauchamp failed, and was duly hanged, while the home-guards, at his request, played " Bonaparte's Retreat from Moscow."

Such were the actual events of the Sharp-Beauchamp murder. But in the maddened and confused cries of faction and the frontier code of romantic honor, the facts took on an ennobled and dramatic form, even (we might say, especially) in the minds of those immediately concerned. From the violently contradictory reports of the newspapers, the public imagination chose what it would, to create a great legend: " The Kentucky Tragedy." Seduction! Love! Revenge! A suicide pact and a hanging! Ann Cooke was no longer a sophisticated, clever jade, with missing fore-teeth, whose honor her brothers thought not worth defending, and whose personality roused the jury's disgust; she had become innocence betrayed — the American Clytæmnestra — or (according to Simms) another Corinne. Jereboam Beauchamp was not an infatuated, hysterical stripling; he was an avenging angel. And of course the popular Colonel Sharp was bound to figure as the lowest kind of villain.

Some such glamour had driven young Beauchamp to the crime; the same glamour became his posthumous defense. The jury might be more open-

minded about the facts of the case, but they left no record beyond the single word "Guilty." Beauchamp left his *Confession* — his conception of the case, now molded white-hot by the trial.

Chivers's drama was almost ready-made for him. Yet he did better by it than any of those who later used the same theme. His instinct for the theater was genuine; and in his brain the tale fell into five inevitable acts of the seduction, the vow, the murder, the trial, and the execution. He plunges into the action at once. The continuity of suspense is perfectly sustained. Each act, moreover, is dramatically built; there is always something doing; even the soliloquies deal (as they should) with psychological action. Chivers does not miss a trick; he makes the most of the original facts; and he was more faithful to the facts than any of his competitors.

He wrote, however, in the heyday of romance in the American theater, when the only tragic scenery was Italian and all the characters were stereotyped. To observe the proprieties, he gave most of his characters poetical names; and today these Alonzos and Rolandos and Elviras walking the streets of Frankfurt, Ky., seem preposterous. But it was the fashion. Poe, indeed, when attempting to dramatize the same tragedy, shifted the scenery with the characters;

but Verdi, when writing an opera about Boston, Mass., saw no incongruity in populating it with Riccardos and Renatos.

By stereotyping his characters, Chivers made an even greater mistake, especially when he turned Ann Cooke into Eudora, a Wronged Female, sentimental, chicken-hearted, and not very bright. Actually she was sixteen years older than her husband; but Chivers makes them school-sweethearts, and represents her as cheated out of her property. Conrad (Beauchamp) is the fiery and chivalrous Southern Gentleman, the Avenger of Womanhood. Alonzo (Sharp) is thoroughly detestable.

But even so, the plot might have carried the characters, if Chivers's dialogue had not been completely absurd. He could not solve the problem of combining poetry and reality. Acting in those days meant oratory and postures, passions and metaphors; and though the tradition is excellent (today we have unfortunately lost all sense of the grand manner), Chivers could only ape and mow. He confuses legal terminology with poetic diction. He invents words. He forgets grammar. He repeats favorite lines, such as "Like blue-eyed woman in a love-sick hour." Neptune's trident seems to be a King Charles's head. When the sheriff enters with the evidence that

proves Conrad's guilt, he proclaims: "Look here! behold this handkerchief and weep!" One can see him strike his attitude but too vividly. The lines throughout, in their unconscious humor, make the play a rival to that once popular novel, *Alonzo and Melissa* (1811) by Daniel Jackson, Jr., which Mark Twain assures us, in his *Life on the Mississippi,* once adorned the center-tables of all the best homes.

A selection from the villain's agonies, which close Act I, illustrates how absurdly Chivers could develop metaphor into poetic physiology. Alonzo (Sharp) has seduced Eudora (Ann Cooke) and is on the point of marrying another.

Alonzo *enters, with downcast looks, as if some misfortune had befallen him.*

Alon. My very heartstrings into terror burst, —
Tuned o'er the highest pitch of agony!
While nature, striving to undo her deeds,
Doth flutter, like a wounded bird, in dust!
Each life-pulse of this heart, new caged, expands
And strikes my splintered ribs, to mangle more!
Each crimson string, by slow degrees, crack loose,
And burn my cheeks with everlasting shame!
While fiery blood leaps through my burning veins,
And washes down my heart, to waste my life.

. . . . .

Now stretch, damned heartstring, till you break! —
Break up life's anguish, deeper than the sea!
My poor Eudora! — She is left alone! —
Now, my conscience tells me, marry her — No!

. . . . .

Oh! Angeline! — this night, I wed with thee, —
Then heap olympic woes on hills of grief!
Oh! my heart! I wish it could be so —
How can Eudora be my wife? — she can't! [*Weeps.*
These tears are from the gulfs of human wo!
This wound — this punctur'd wound! can never heal,
By all the surgery on earth — 'tis done!
And here! — the vessel which once held my tears,
[*Strikes his heart.*
Is one eternal flaw, — one fractur'd wreck! —
And every crack is leaking out my life!
Let nature reinstate herself again. —
What's this? another heartstring on the stretch? —
Burst, foul offender! burst! and let me rest!

. . . . .

Oh! for a sea to drown this living fire! —
Sieze on him, terror! Vengeance! take revenge!
Pursue the villain throughout all the earth, —
What's this? conscience? death! Satan! wrath and hell!
My head! my heart! my soul! — the world is on me! —
[*Rushes out.*

The play would act better than it reads; but it reads so badly that one forgets the drama. The pantomime is excellent, the poetry execrable. Would that actions really spoke louder than words!

Yet after all, Chivers was the very first to appreciate the literary possibilities of the Sharp-Beauchamp murder; [5] he surpassed Poe and all his other competitors in fidelity to the drama of the facts; and he did dramatize those facts better than they, though they surpassed him in poetry. Later, as we shall see, Chivers learned where his failure lay; so he recast this play of his youth into another, *Leoni, or the Orphan of Venice*. And the family tradition is that he sold *Leoni* with four other dramas to the manager of the Covent Garden Theatre, London. So his dramatic sense had something to it, after all.

Meanwhile his wanderings led him farther and farther north. In 1834 he wrote a badly Byronic "Hymn to the Ocean at First Sight"; he begins by bidding it to roll, and ends by begging it to cease. He gave the place simply as "Ocean"; perhaps he was on it; in which case we can understand his emotions and pardon the badness of his expression of them. Just what the course of his wanderings was, we cannot be sure,[6] but in September, 1834, he tossed off a

[5] Unless we include Clason's conjectural drama of 1833. C. F. Hoffman's account of the tragedy in his *Winter in the West* (New York, 1835, Vol. II, pp. 160–161, 332–343) is of course later.

[6] He claims to have written "The Raising of Tabitha" (*Memoralia*) on June 8, 1834, at New York, and the "Hymn to Death" (*Conrad and Eudora*), August, 1834, in the "West"; while the "Hymn to the Deity" (*Memoralia*) is simply dated "Oak Grove, Ga., 1834" — it is of course not unlikely that he should have paid his home a flying visit.

couple of poems at Baltimore; and on October 18 he celebrated his twenty-fifth birthday at Philadelphia with a poem to his mother. While there he also wrote " To Ellen," " To Miss W***** " and " To a Ladye."

His business at Philadelphia was the printing of his second volume, *Conrad and Eudora; or, The Death of Alonzo. A Tragedy. In Five Acts. Founded on the Murder of Sharpe, by Beauchamp, in Kentucky*. There is no publisher's name on the title-page; evidently he was paying again for the printing. The book was issued toward the end of the year. Its appearance was probably his way of celebrating his twenty-fifth birthday; and it must have come out in time for Christmas presents home.[7]

The tragedy occupies the first half of the book; the second half consists of forty-nine lyrics grouped together as " Songs of the Heart." They have neither the sense of burning wrong nor the curiosity about metrics that made *The Path of Sorrow* at least interesting. Chivers was forgetting his sorrows; when they return to his memory, they strike stagey attitudes and speak in falsetto.

The opening poem, " Lord Byron's Dying Prayer

[7] The latest date in the book is October 18, 1834; but the preface to *Leoni* (*Georgia Citizen*, May 17, 1851), which was undoubtedly intended to preface *Conrad and Eudora*, was dated November 8, 1834, Philadelphia.

to Ada," reflects Chivers's emotions towards his own little daughter.[8] Many of the other poems are still more obviously personal; of them we have said enough. " The Chickamauga Indian's Conversion " is a defense of the Indians (showing that they could be Christianized) and an analysis of the psychology of conversion, which was probably based on first-hand information. The Indian's father was a sachem killed in battle; the boy was presumably dedicated by his mother to revenge. Sickened by the murderous excesses of his tribe, the Indian saw drive " between his soul and heaven " a white cloud, which " tore his soul from sin apart." During fifteen years he prayed for further comfort, and at last out of a cloud came the voice " like a child's, but not so loud," which brought him ultimate peace. " The Indian Sachem Slain," however, is only an American translation of Charles Wolfe's " Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna."

As poetry, the whole volume of *Conrad and Eudora* is a failure, though it may not have seemed half-bad in 1834. In some ways it shows improvement over *The Path of Sorrow*. A few vivid lines begin to appear; such as these on a poet:

[8] As " The Dying Poet " it reappeared in *Nacoochee*, with all the obvious references to Byron omitted; in *Virginalia* it appeared again, worked over, but with the original title.

He made the very thunderbolt his pen,
And with the ink of lightning wrote his song;

or these on love:

Thou hast new pinioned thought and wedded heaven!
Made God thy banquet, and got drunk on love!
Thou hast been sitting in some twilight bower
When all thine energies were radiant suns.

Chivers's lyrical sense is developing, too; he is compressing the diffuseness of his lengthier poems into songs. The following stanza, from the " Death of Adaline," indicates something of a feeling for pattern:

Sweeter than harp or lute
Were those sweet tones which trembled on mine ear;
Softer than Dorian flute
Was that fast failing voice which lingered near! —
But oh! 'twas heard in heaven! — where dwells our God!
That great white throne, where man hath never trod!
Mother, do not weep.

He is experimenting with refrains; he tries many meters from trimeter to septenary; a " Sonnet to My Mother " consists of three iambic pentameter stanzas, rhymed as spenserians! Perhaps the best poem in the book is the following one, dated 1831:

GOD

Thou speakest Thy language through this universe!
Thy voices, through this world, are borne on winds!
With sunbeams Thou dost write creation's verse!
Thy songs are writ in stars — Thy stars on minds!
And on the sea, and on the shore, at morn and even!
Thy music, rolling spheres! Thy voices, songs in heaven!

Thou art, oh God! — Thou makest this world thy rest!
Thy words are thunders! — breath, each morning breeze!
Thy smiles are suns! — Thou art from east to west!
Thou movest down rivers! Thou dost roll through seas!
Thy name's Eternity! Thyself man's soul!
Thy house all space! — Thine everlasting whole!

But neither the Schuylkill nor any of the many rivers of Georgia showed the least sign of bursting into flame as yet.

Chapter V

A Third Book and a Second Marriage

IN 1835, Chivers ended his exile and returned to Georgia, where he lived at his home for the next two years.[1] One of the first things he did was to send some poems to the newly founded *Southern Literary Messenger*. Its March number (I, 387) contained, in the column *To Contributors, Correspondents, &c.*, the following notice:

> There is a great deal of feeling in many of the communications sent to the publisher by T.H.C., M.D.; but to our poor taste, there is not much *poetry*. We question whether the Doctor will not find the lancet and pill-box of more profit in that warm region to which he has emigrated, than the offerings of his prolific muse. The poetical manufacture depends more upon the *quality* than the *quantity* of its fabrics, for success.

[1] He wrote poems at his home on March 17 and April 10, 1835 (one of the lean years), and on April 10, May 5, June 8, and August 8, 1836. "To Adelais, the Queen of my Heart" (*Georgia Citizen,* October 18, 1856), was written October 6, 1836, at Atlanta, Ga. In this same year he delivered a "Temperance Address" to the Temperance Society at Philips' Bridge (*Georgia Citizen,* April 15, 1859).

This squib is not only the first discoverable mention of Chivers in any periodical; it is also the first evidence of communication between him and the brilliant young editor, Edgar A. Poe.[2]

As Chivers was later to accuse Poe of plagiarism, and as the controversy has never been settled, this moment has its historic importance and its evidential significance; for it proves that Poe knew Chivers's work this early.

The *Southern Literary Messenger* (in spite of several statements to the contrary) never changed its policy of refusing Chivers's verses, and its review of *Atlanta* (June, 1853) was devastating. In February, 1844, however, it did accept a prose article, "Shelley."[3]

It is difficult to suppose that Chivers did not send a copy of his new book to the *Southern Literary Messenger* for review; but no review appeared. At the turn of the year (December, 1835, and January, 1836), however, the magazine included "Scenes from an Unpublished Drama" — Poe's *Politian,* also based on the "Kentucky Murder."

One cannot help guessing that Poe read Chivers's

[2] That Poe wrote this paragraph has generally been accepted; but Professor T. O. Mabbott tells me that he has weighty doubts. At any rate, Poe as editor did read Chivers's manuscripts (Poe to Chivers, June 6, 1842).

[3] Called to my attention by Mr. J. B. Whiting.

play, and liked the subject but not the verse. So he set to work to write a really poetical play on the same subject; then, after a few efforts, he discovered that he had not the slightest talent for the theater, and published the fragments already finished. But in doing so, Poe was no plagiarist; as Professor Mabbott justly remarks: " Considering that both plays have a single series of incidents as a common basis, surprisingly few parallels can be found." [4]

Then, in August, 1836, the *Southern Literary Messenger* republished Poe's " Israfel." [5] In the same year (but Chivers does not name the month) Chivers wrote " The Song of Seralim," which was not published until many years later.[6] It has been called " a direct imitation of Poe's ' Israfel ' "; [7] and if so, is the first evidence of Poe's influence on Chivers. But is there actually any imitation? Both poems tell of an angel at whose song the other angels become mute with delight; moreover, the name Seralim is almost an anagram of Israfel. But here the parallels stop. The Mohammedan angel with his lute of heart-strings is not mentioned. Chivers, with his theory of heaven as a state of music, would naturally light

[4] *Politian,* edited by T. O. Mabbott, Richmond, 1923, p. 84.
[5] It had appeared previously only in the very rare *Poems* of 1831.
[6] *Virginalia,* 1853, pp. 123–125.
[7] Poe's *Works* (Virginia edition), edited by James A. Harrison, Vol. VII, p. 275.

upon just this subject. He *may* have seen Poe's poem (if he had not stopped his subscription to the *Messenger,* after its comment on his own verse); but what really was in his mind was the "Prologue in Heaven" of Goethe's *Faust.*

THE SONG OF SERALIM

A Celestial Melologue.

"Break forth into joy, sing." — *Isaiah.*

RAPHAEL

The Stars are pausing in their orbs tonight,
And silence is the concert which they hymn,
For they are rapt to dumbness with delight
Listening to hear the song of SERALIM!

GABRIEL

Myriads of Angels are assembled near,
Clad in white garments, whiter than pure snow,
From all Heaven's flowery realms afar to hear
Oceans of music from his sweet lips flow.

MICHAEL

For, as the Stars drink glory from the Sun,
And without which they soon would cease to shine —
So do the Angels from that HOLY ONE
In Heaven draw theirs, which makes them so divine.

CHORUS OF ANGELS IN HEAVEN

From thy celestial lyre,
O! SERALIM!
Scatter through Heaven the radiant notes of fire!
And from thy soul-uplifting tongue,
In concert with each golden wire,
Pour forth the living tide of song —
The sweetest, holiest hymn
That ever Angel sung!

SERALIM SINGS

Praise God, ye Angels of the Heavens above!
Praise Him, ye Seraphs who can never die!
And you, Archangels! whose delight is love,
Thunder your anthems through eternity!

Let the uncounted Realms of endless Space
Join in their orbits to unite in praise —
(Whose light is the reflection of His face —)
Loving aloud the ANCIENT ONE OF DAYS!

Lift up your voices, Children of the Earth!
Praise God, ye Spirits of the countless spheres!
And you, ye HABITANTS OF HEAVEN! pour forth
The tide of song through Heaven's eternal years!

Fill up the canopy of Heaven above
With song's immortal, everlasting sea;
And drown the Stars in one wide sea of love
Poured forth in praises of the Deity.

CHORUS OF ANGELS IN HEAVEN

Above all that Archangel ever taught,
Rapt in the highest bliss of Heaven divine —
Second alone to Him the CAUSE of thought —
O! SERALIM! was that sweet song of thine!
Oaky Grove, Ga., 1836.

Three years later, about 1839, Chivers began to refer in his poems to Israfel, who was a real symbol to him; but for reasons given later, it seems obvious that Poe's poem was not his source.

Yet even if it were, he would have done no more than Poe had done. Two poets, as yet personally unknown to each other, were stimulated by the other's work to write poems, each in his own manner. That is all.

On January 8, 1837, Chivers was again at Philadelphia. In the same year and the same city, the Galignani edition of the *Poetical Works of Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats* (Paris, 1829) was republished. The same year marks the influence of these poets (Keats in particular) on Chivers.

Keats, the poet of the five senses, reduced all thought and all emotion to an exquisite, intense sensuousness; this tendency of his, with his rich, exotic versification, stimulated Chivers's poetic instinct and disciplined his taste simultaneously. He abjured

enormous words and furious emotions; he was practicing metrical tidiness. His stride is calmer, surer. One can begin to quote whole stanzas, instead of selecting lines.

She died in meekness, like the noiseless lamb
  When slain upon the altar by the knife;
And lay reclining on her couch, so calm
  That all who saw her said she still had life;
And like the humming-bird that seeks the bower,
  But wings her swiftly from the place away,
Bearing the dew-drop from the fading flower —
  Her spirit wandered to the Isle of Day.

She died in softness, like the Dorian flute
  When heard melodious on the hills at night —
When every voice by that loved one is mute,
  And all the holy heavens above are bright.
And like the rainbow of the sunny skies
  (The dew-drop fillet of the brow of even)
That blends its colors as the evening dies,
  Her beauty melted in the light of Heaven.[8]

The humming-bird is good; the rainbow is perfect. We recognize the "Dorian flute"; Chivers had used it before. But now he felt that his first two books had best be forgotten; he was prepar-

[8] "The Dying Beauty" (*Nacoochee*), revised and compressed as "Euthanasia" (*Virginalia*), where it is dated "New York, October, 1837." It is the latest poem that we can date in *Nacoochee*.

ing the manuscript of a third book, in which he put all that he thought worth saving of his earlier efforts.

The new book was *Nacoochee; or, the Beautiful Star, with Other Poems* (New York, 1837). Chivers was paying for the publication, as usual; the name " W. E. Dean, Printer, 2 Ann Street " appears where a publisher's name belonged. The Preface is dated September 10, 1837, but as one of the poems was written in October, the book must have appeared in the last quarter of the year — perhaps again in time for Christmas presents.

The Preface is remarkable for its transcendental earnestness. Chivers believed, of course, in an afterworld of ecstasy. His sister's dying vision of a harp he took to symbolize that Heaven is a state of music; and the dreams and visions that rose from the depths within him and naturally formed themselves into verse were but so much first-hand evidence of all this — portions of the Divine Imagination that leaked through into mortal consciousness. To cultivate poetry, then, was keeping open the way of communication with Eternity.

Meanwhile the Baptist Hell had unobstrusively slipped out of his universe. His intense observation of the phenomena of his own mind had led him to

this philosophy of life. Some trick of the *Zeitgeist* had formed him into a ready-made disciple of Boston Transcendentalism; which, however, gave him nothing but confirmation of his own experiences.

Poetry is that crystal river of the soul which runs through all the avenues of life, and after purifying the affections of the heart, empties itself into the Sea of God. Now, he who dives the deepest into that mysterious sea brings up the greatest number of the shells of truth, and is made richer in the lore of the wisdom of the universe. For the more a man sees of the wise relations that subsist between him and God, the greater number of the strings of joy does he touch, because he is thereby made capable of diving deeper into the perfections of the things that are, and of communing oftener with the Author of those several beauties. . . .

Poetry is the power given by God to man of manifesting these relations. It is that wave of the soul, in the ocean of life, which washes the shores of the flower-gemmed Elysium. It is that beacon of joy upon the Utopian Isles, which ushers us into the realities of those things which are to be. It is only the susceptible, poetical, and refined mind that can see these things as they are, while others think they only see them as they ought to be.

. . . Poetry is the soul of his nature, whereby, from communing with the beauties of this earth, he is capable of giving birth to other beings brighter than himself; and of lifting up his spirit to the presence of those things which he shall enjoy in another state; and which he manifests to *this* through the instrumentality of certain

words and sentences melodiously concatenated; and such as correspond with the definite and wise configurations of the mouth in the communication of thought through language.

There are delineations which grow out of the capabilities of man, which seem to outshine realities, but do not, because they spring from the fountains of things that exist. There is nothing in the world that is not equivalent in brightness to the poetical manifestations of it. People too often mistake the *relations* of things for the *things* themselves. It is thus, from the wellsprings of poetry, we draw the healing fountains of the soul, whereby we baptize the passions, purify the sentiments, and cause to spring up in the minds of others the same emotions that live and breathe in our own. . . . It is the outpourings of the skies, and the crystal rivers of the fountain of Religion. It is the Pomona of the soul that presides over the Paradise of the heart. It is the Caduceus of all things.

A man who is setting sail for another country — as all men are — one that is leaving the coral strands of the sea of life for the great ocean of Eternity — would feel very poor at the end of his journey, were he to look back and reflect upon the beautiful shells he had left behind him upon the shore, and have no wherewithal at the great day of accounts to pay his reckoning. . . .

The title-poem is named " Nacoochee," an Indian word which is popularly translated as meaning " The Evening Star." This name is associated forever with a charming valley under the shadow of Mt. Yonah, in the northernmost part of Georgia —

a valley remarkable for a large prehistoric mound. The legends about this mound differ. One of them[9] describes Nacoochee as an Indian princess of such celestial beauty that her people virtually worshiped her. Her heart was won, however, by Laceola, an Indian prince of a neighboring but hostile tribe. They vowed eternal love upon the banks of the Chattahoochee. Nacoochee's father surprised them; one of his warriors shot an arrow at the hated prince; but Nacoochee sprang to receive it in her bosom. Her stupefied lover was soon dispatched. The two were buried in one grave; over them the repentant father raised the lofty mound.

Another version of the tale[10] involves a companion of De Soto's, Lorenzo by name. When the Spaniards reached Guaxule, in May, 1540, Lorenzo heard that priceless treasures were concealed somewhere in a cavern on Mt. Yonah. To learn their exact whereabouts, he endeavored to fascinate Queen Echoee, succeeding well enough to earn his death at the hands of old Wahoo, the chief of the tribe. The susceptible queen and her two daughters, Eola and Nacoochee, were doomed to die. Echoee

[9] Rev. George White: *Historical Collections of Georgia,* New York, 1854, pp. 486–487.

[10] Lucian Lamar Knight: *Georgia's Landmarks, Memorials and Legends,* Atlanta, Ga., 1914, Vol. II, pp. 1032–1033.

and Eola were drowned, but Nacoochee was saved by Sautee, the sixteen-year-old son of a Choctaw chief. They loved; their nuptials were forbidden. The lovers fled; were pursued; and on the point of capture, hurled themselves together over a cliff of Mt. Yonah. Their bodies were buried together, and a large mound was raised over their grave.

Alas for legends! Both tales are most un-Indian. There is no evidence that "Nacoochee" ever meant "the evening star"; no one is sure what it means or what language it is. And though De Soto did reach the spot in May, 1540, he never mentions Lorenzo, Echoee, Eola, Wahoo, or the fated Nacoochee and Sautee; instead, he complains that a captured "queen" of Cofitachiqui escaped, with one of the negro slaves of the Spaniard as her husband. (Perhaps this tale, concluded with the favorite device of the "Lovers' Leap," is the origin of the legend.) The name of Nacoochee does appear, however, in late eighteenth-century maps, as the name of the Cherokee village on this spot; and here the Cherokees dwelt until about 1819. They said that they had forgotten who erected the mound, and why; they used it as the site of their town-house.

The profane spades of archælogists have violated

the secrets of centuries.[11] The mound had already been beheaded, as a site for a summer-house, and relics had been discovered. But the archæologists pierced to the heart of the mound, and discovered — not two bodies side by side — but seventy-five seperate burials of adults and children, some of them in stone-box graves; decorated pottery; fantastic tobacco-pipes of stone and pottery; beads of pearl and shell, besides other ornaments; arrowheads; polished stone discs used in games; a copper celt and copper ornaments. The mound had been built up gradually, layer by layer; in the top layer there were European beads and a Spanish coin dated 1808.

Chivers, however, could not be concerned with facts undiscovered in his day; and either he resorted to some unrecorded legend, or helped himself to a mixture of Cherokee and Creek myths. His heroine bears the mysterious name; and she is also of celestial beauty. But at that point Chivers abandons the legend of northern Georgia, and crosses the state to its southern-most border; he identifies Nacoochee with one of the Daughters of the Sun who dwell in the Lost Paradise — a disappearing and unap-

[11] George G. Heye, F. W. Hodge, and George H. Pepper: *The Nacoochee Mound in Georgia, New York,* 1918. (*Contributions from the Museum of the American Indian Heye Foundation,* Vol. IV, no. 3.)

proachable isle in the great Okefinokee swamp.[12] Then, dissatisfied with this location, he shifts it to the " lake, or collection of water, between the Oakmulgee [i. e., Ocmulgee] and Flint rivers in Georgia," and adds to the island's inhabitants various great chiefs and an immortal rattlesnake with a blazing diamond in its forehead.[13] But these do not appear in the poem itself. Heroine and setting thus being provided, Chivers then proceeds with a symbolic narrative of his own devising.

Nacoochee is a soul who has not yet attained the ultimate heaven, for which she prays continually, but has progressed to the plane just below it, the Terrestrial Eden. This is the mythical island glimpsed sometimes by lost warriors but virtually unreachable. It is paved with shells which make continual music;[14] it represents the poetical ecstasy.

Nacoochee lives here in direct communication with Eternity. She does not know as yet of the possibility of human love (Chivers calls her a " Dian ");

[12] Knight: *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 464–467.

[13] Obviously the Uktena, of Cherokee legend. See James Mooney: *Myths of the Cherokee*, 19th Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, 1900, Part I, p. 297.

[14] Chivers emphasizes these shells in his preface as well as in his poem. In a later work, *Atlanta*, the isle is frankly called " the true, blessed Island of Poesy." Poetry is the highest state of existence possible to the flesh; it is just beneath Eternity itself.

but " beneath her zone a passion dwelt, almost unto herself unknown." Her personality, in short, has not yet achieved complete self-expression, which it can do only through love.[15]

Meanwhile an Indian tribe has been so ravaged by misfortune that only two members are left: an old man and his son, Ostenee. Ostenee has beheld Nacoochee in a dream; his father confirms the vision, and lest their race be extinguished, Ostenee sets out in his canoe to find Nacoochee and bring her home. Though he does not know it, he is actually in search of his own ideal, which he intends to bring down to the plane of reality. On his voyage he has a vision of Astarte, who symbolizes the unsuspected awakening in him of the human love which also lurks in Nacoochee.

Finally he reaches the island, where he beholds Nacoochee in prayer, while spirits minister to her. Abashed at his daring, which he now thinks mere presumption, the youth feels that he should not approach her. She, on the other hand, is terrified by the appearance of this dark-skinned, earthly being; and ignorant of her destiny, she cries out for Azrael, the

[15] From his later works we know that Chivers believed Man and Woman to be the two halves of one soul, divided upon earth but united in heaven. Nacoochee is really the higher portion of a split personality; her salvation can come only through the union which is love.

Angel of Death, to save her. Upon a celestial charger he comes and bears her away.

Here the canto ends, with a few stanzas of personal lament that identify Ostenee with the poet. In the Preface, Chivers promised a continuation, but the public never demanded it, and the remainder of "Nacoochee" is lost. We may assume either that Ostenee lived upon the isle until he became so transfigured that Nacoochee forgot her fear and returned; or that their eventual union took place in some supermundane realm. For Chivers would never disappoint true lovers.[16] But perhaps the narrative should be worked out according to the psychology which it symbolizes. The conflict between the instincts of purity and the flesh — a conflict awakened reciprocally in both the higher and lower halves of the ego — and the first, temporary solution of the conflict by an appeal to the death-instinct: this is the true plot of Canto I.

"Nacoochee" is not a perfect poem. Chivers followed Keats in subordinating the narrative to sensuous descriptions of the scenery and the characters. He did not trouble to preserve a purely Indian atmosphere. Cynthia, Dian, Psyche, Astarte, Azrael,

[16] Later Chivers recast the symbolism into a new poem, *Atlanta, or the True Blessed Island of Poesy* (1853). Ostenee and the isle reappear; but the narrative is wholly different.

and the cherubim are unexpected visitors in Georgia. Nacoochee herself, in sky-blue satin and silver sandals, bearing a harp, does not conform to the ordinary idea of a squaw. Yet these small points do much to give the poem its delightful flavor. It is Chateaubriand, with his sentimentality chastened by the exaltation of Shelley, enriched with the sensuousness of Keats, and expressed in the stanza of Spenser; none the less, a poem which only Chivers, with his occasional touches of reality and a psychological structure, could have written.

The lyrics which fill the body of the book are chiefly songs sacred and secular, several of them (" Song of Adoration to God " and " Faith," for example) being handled adequately, simply, and with considerable charm. One of them, " Morning Hymn," appeared in Greeley's *New-Yorker* (December 9, 1837); it is the earliest publication of any of Chivers's work in a periodical, as far as we know.[17] One poem is revised from *The Path of Sorrow;* seven more from *Conrad and Eudora;* and though none of the poems is dated in this volume, there is evidence that some of them were written as far back as the days of Transylvania.[18] Evidently Chivers was

[17] Called to my attention by Professor T. O. Mabbott.

[18] According to dates in *Conrad and Eudora, Virginalia,* and the *Georgia*

collecting all the juvenilia he thought worth preserving. There is also a coincidence between certain titles in the *New York Mirror* for 1836–37 and titles in *Nacoochee,* that makes us date some poems rather late. " Nacoochee's Prayer " was evidently modeled on " The Indian Maiden's Prayer " (July 30, 1836); the Rev. William Croswell's " Drink and Away " (February 25, 1837) is based on exactly the same quotation from Dr. Shaw's *Travels* as Chivers's " Drink and Away "; and Charles Fenno Hoffman's " Morning Hymn " (June 17, 1837) uses the initial refrain, " Let there be light! " that Chivers uses.[19]

The terminal tale, " Malavolti; or, the Downfall of the Alamo," must have been written (in part at least) after the famous massacre on March 6, 1836. Texas had been owned by Mexico, but was settled chiefly by Americans. Favoritism in land-grants, steady pressure to turn everybody Roman Catholic, and the forbidding of further immigration from the United States brought matters to a head. Though in

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Citizen, at least two were written in 1829, three in 1830, two in 1831, two in 1834, one in 1835, and two in 1836.

[19] Once a poet started a good pattern, he found plenty of imitators. R. R.'s " Drink and Away " (*New World,* August 21, 1841, Vol. III, p. 114) is but another of several poems with the same title and meter; and Henry Bacon's *Sacred Flora* (Boston, 1855, p. 128) contains a " Let There Be Light."

November, 1835, the Texans turned down a projected Declaration of Independence, hostilities were soon begun. The shameless massacres of 1836 forced the Texans at last to fling off allegiance to Mexico, and by 1837, the independence of Texas was recognized by the United States, Great Britain, France, and Belgium. Admittance as one of the United States was not so easy; it meant a great extension of slave territory; but after a long wrangle, Texas became part of the Union on March 1, 1845.

" Malavolti " is one of the worst things Chivers ever published. He evidently tried to tell each fragment of the story in the most appropriate metrical form; as a result he committed his own massacres on plot and form. This experiment may have been suggested by " Christabel "; it looks more like an unfortunate precursor of Amy Lowell's polyphonic prose. No false Pindarics were ever so daring.

The " Song of the Maids of Texas " was also inspired by the recent recognition of Texan independence, — that is, inspired in title, for the poem itself is concerned solely with the lovely spring weather and not at all with history. Chivers probably changed the name of an already written lyric, as a compliment to the heroic state. And probably he also inserted the

fall of the Alamo as a spectacular means of killing Malavolti.

The best poems in *Nacoochee* are the blank verse poems which immediately follow the title-poem. Their meter is regular; their strength is sometimes clumsy but more often effective. "The Death of Time" is a vast vision of the coming of Eternity, which certainly out-Polloks that then famous epic, *The Course of Time*. Pollok was a dreary, orthodox soul, who could bother to attack novels in his account of the Last Judgement; Chivers, however, had a really metaphysical imagination, which now and again pierced the clouds to sudden visions of the lost moon setting behind Eternity, or of angels digging a grave in chaos for the corpse of Time.[20] "The Soaring Swan" has won the praise of Professor J. A. Harrison, who says that it is "exceedingly poetical, and has evidently influenced Rossetti."[21] Certainly in spots it has a curious visionary luminosity which is almost Pre-Raphaelite.

[20] Pollok apparently started the fashion of writing poems about the moment when "there should be time no longer" (Revelation x, 6). Sumner Lincoln Fairfield had published his "Death of Time" in *Lays of Melpomene* (Portland, 1824, pp. 48–52); and revised it in the *North American Magazine*, IV (September, 1834), 321–323; Henry B. Hirst included his "Funeral of Time" in *The Coming of the Mammoth* (Boston, 1845). Neither poem resembles Chivers's, though Hirst evidently had read Chivers's work.

[21] *Complete Works of Poe* (Virginia edition), Vol. VII, p. 284.

THE SOARING SWAN

Seen from the Alleghany Mountains

Thou art soaring away, beautiful bird!
Upon thy pinions into distant lands.

. . . . .

[Thou] seem'st above my soul's uplifted gaze
A snow-fleece newly shorn from Shiloh's lambs
And dropt half-way from heaven! — Thou art alone
In pearl-tinct azure, pathless, bent for rest,
As now thy pillowed wings are cleaving heaven!

. . . . .

Thou'rt buried, artless emigrant, in heaven!
Thou digg'st thy grave among exalted clouds!
God bless thy joyful flight! may seraphs guide
Thy lonely passport unto sun-sought climes.

. . . . .

While in the welkin of the skies, the clouds,
Like undulating isles spread out upon
The ocean of eternity, appear
In lawny prospect, like the sweets of some
Ambrosial grove whose incense waves to heaven.
And far away they gather into floods
Of glory, like the waves of sound that came
From Ocean, when the wings of angels flew
To Salem with the music of the Lord.

. . . . .

Fly on, celestial bird! for thou shalt rest
Upon the waters of that sunny land
To which thou goest, when, upon thy wings,

Bathed in the fleecy bankments of the sky,
No angels lean to listen to the soul
That now repines! . . .
Beneath thy voice
A ripple shall go forth, so heavenly sweet,
That it shall be, around thy reedy isles,
Like Judah's harp that on the willow boughs
Hung over Jordan. . . .
Sail on
To some transporting scene, where, on the streams,
Beside the tasselled reed-isles, thou shalt hear
The mellow cadence of the winds, and soothe
Thy weary soul once more. For there shall flow
From out the circlings of thy floating form,
Bathed in the flickering dalliance of the gems
Of thy sun-cinctured dimples, like the pearl
Of ocean set in beryl by the deep —
A shell-toned music — whose deep sound shall be
As soft as that sweet sigh of angels, when
They whisper to the soul celestial peace.

Thou art soaring around the throne of light,
Bathed in the tingling radiance of the sun,
Whose bright effulgence, gilding thine abyss
Of burnished glory, scales the heights of heaven!

. . . . .

And from the silver woof of osier boughs,
Bathed in the balmy tears of dewy night,
The spirits of the universe shall weave
A green pavilion for thy winter couch,
And cause the mantle of thy languid mail

To dabble in the ripples of the stream.
And there the long pent music of the voice
Of Nature shall go forth among the aisles,
And shake from off the beaded suckle-boughs
The nectar-dews, whose rustlings on the streams
Shall wake new waves of melody.

. . . . .

For they shall fall as soft upon that lake
As if an angel's hand had stricken them
From out the leaning rainbows, which were made
A rainbow-harp, whose seven strings were hues.

And there upon the halcyon of thy home,
Bathed in the radiant glimmerings of thy waves —
Burning like molten silver — thou shalt rest.

. . . . .

And from the labyrinthine aisles of flowers,
Upon the suckle-scented gales, shall flow
The rich balsamic odours of the spring,
And from the bare arms of the boughs shall rain
The luscious clusters, till their tones shall be
As soft as the first audible steps of one
Beloved, at the last meeting, heard at night.
And when the curtains of dark night shall fall
Upon the eyelids of the day, and leave the locks
Of darkness sprinkled with the stars; and when
From out the folds of Night shall steal the moon
To bathe in thy sweet waters — take thy rest. . . .

Thou'rt gone, celestial bird! — thy pinions fade!
I linger here, gazing upon thy lessening form,

Buoyant between two distant worlds, outspread —
Like lovers parting — those who meet no more!
As night, dark night! — her mantle gathers round,
Wrapping thy milky form with dusky shroud. . . .

In one of the lines omitted here, Chivers bids the wild swan learn from its mate (American swans are monogamous) to "seek no second love." But just about the time when *Nacoochee* appeared, Chivers was violating his own advice; for on November 21, 1837, at New York,[22] he married Miss Harriet Hunt of Northampton and Springfield, Mass. Some time on his travels that year,[23] he had gone north of New York. While in Springfield, where he was getting some books bound, he met Harriet, daughter of George and Jerusha (Smith) Hunt, and seventh in descent from Deacon Jonathan Hunt, who left Connecticut about 1660 to establish his line in Northampton.[24] Harriet was only sixteen (she had been born February 2, 1819); her extreme youth and

[22] Dr. Lewis Chase has furnished me with date and place.

[23] As New England had not as yet inspired him to any poetry, we cannot say exactly when. He wrote poems on January 8 at Philadelphia, April 10 at New York, May 10 at Oaky Grove, Ga., June 8 at New York, July 10 "on the ocean," August at Saratoga Springs, and September 10 and October 10 and November 20 at New York. He was married the next day, wrote a poem December 18 at Philadelphia and the last poem of the year, December 25, at New York. The trip to Massachusetts probably took place between January 8 and April 10. One may suspect something wrong about place or date of the poem written in Georgia.

[24] T. B. Wyman: *Genealogy of the Name and Family of Hunt,* Boston, 1862–63, pp. 176, 178, 181, 189, 198.

beauty are still a tradition. Again Colonel Robert Chivers was generous; the Southern poet and she were married; and together they continued the roving life from city to city which appealed to the young husband.

Chapter VI

A Play Rewritten and a Prophecy Fulfilled

ON APRIL 1, 1838, the news of the death of his beloved mother reached Chivers at Philadelphia, where he relieved his feelings in a bitter sonnet. He went south for the funeral; at Oaky Grove, on April 9, he wrote a *Lament* over her death.[1] Already she had quite naturally assumed her place in the resplendent heaven which was her son's great faith. By June he was back in New York, where he had evidently settled for a while.

His big work of 1838–39 was the rewriting of *Conrad and Eudora.* He was now fully aware of its faults and absurdities; he was determined to eliminate them and make the most of the good material. He slashed and added; he rearranged and revised; he snipped and pasted; until at last the original play

[1] Two poems in *The Lost Pleiad* are dated as having been written on April 10, 1838, at New York. But Chivers had evidently gone south, on the testimony of other poems. Moreover "To One Beloved," written in 1838 off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, was published in the *Philadelphia Saturday Courier* on June 16, 1838; which proves that some time in the first half of the year he was on the boat sailing either to or from the South.

was a Theseus' Boat, — still there, but wholly different.

He shifted the scene to Venice, and changed the names of all the characters. Instead of beginning with the seduction, he now began *in medias res* with the abandonment, thus making the former chronicle into an Aristotelian plot. Next, to swell the play to the proper bulk, he added a closely inwoven subplot which was wholly new. This involved a slight change in the catastrophe, and also crowded off all the minor characters in the original pamphlet. Then, with his eye upon the stage, he began ruthlessly cutting out the conventional oaths by the elements, and the non-dramatic soliloquies, some of the deleted lines being among the best in the play, as far as mere poetry went. The result was *Leoni; or, the Orphan of Venice.*[2]

[2] The manuscript, the last page lost, is in the huge theater collection at Harvard University (TS 4383.480F). The date on the cover was originally 1838, but was changed to 1839. The text shows the most elaborate reworking. The play was published, with severe cuts, in the *Georgia Citizen,* May 17, 24, 31, and June 7, 14, 1851.

Chivers evidently considered *Conrad and Eudora* and *Leoni* as the same play. The preface, in the *Georgia Citizen,* describes its inception at Transylvania; and in a letter dated November 1, 1845 (*Century Magazine,* February, 1903, Vol. LXV, p. 555), Chivers said: "In 1834 I wrote a Play in Five Acts, which received the commendations of the greatest men in the world, yet it has never been published up to this hour. . . . [It] is now in the possession of Mr. Poe, one of the greatest men that ever lived."

The title *Leona* [*sic*] appears in the list of unpublished works given by Louise Threet Hodges in her not too trustworthy article on Chivers in the *Alkahest Magazine,* October, 1898. She informs us earlier that "he wrote several tragedies, one of which was sold to Manager Cov, Garden Theatre

Leoni is a five-act tragedy, in the set blank-verse tradition of the day. The title was derived from the two best-known plays of Otway, to whom Chivers is otherwise indebted; the tone has something of Lee's ferocity, though little of his extravagance; and the poetry is adorned with metaphors in Dryden's manner. The substance, however, is still the Sharp-Beauchamp murder: Leoni is Ann Cooke, Alvino is Beauchamp, and Count Alvar is Colonel Sharp. "The creation of the other characters, and the construction of the plot, are my own invention," Chivers remarks in the Preface.

The five acts deal successively with the abandonment, the oath of vengeance, the murder, the sentence, and the double suicide (for such the catastrophe has become). But the whole intrigue is involved with the subplot of Don Carlos (whose name happens to be the title of another of Otway's trage-

[*sic*], London, Eng."; this may be it. But no production is listed in Reginald Clarence's comprehensive *"The Stage" Cyclopaedia* (London, 1909). The British reviews were then announcing so loudly that nothing good could come out of America, that few managers would have dared risk a production. Forrest's production of Bird's *Gladiator* (one of the most successful plays on the American stage) was howled down in London in 1836 by cries of "Shakspere! Shakspere!" (*Life and Dramatic Works of Robert Montgomery Bird,* ed. Foust, N. Y., 1919, pp. 62–63.) Eight years later, Boker's *Calaynos* was produced successfully in London; but in 1853, when his *Betrothal* promised to be another success, the entire press arose in fierce defense of the British stage against American invasions, until the manager was forced to withdraw it. (A. H. Quinn: *The Dramas of George Henry Boker,* in *PMLA,* June, 1917, Vol. XXXII, p. 241.)

dies). Twenty years ago in Spain he had wed the innocent Almeda; after two years of bliss, she was stolen from him by the disguised Count Alvar and his tool Don Pedro. She disappeared forever, and now Don Carlos joins his oath of vengeance to Leoni's. But Don Carlos cannot commit the murder, as Count Alvar has recognized him; he would be suspected at once. So Leoni sends to Rome for her childhood sweetheart, Alvino, on whom no suspicion could light.

Count Alvar not only notifies the authorities of Don Carlos's threats, to which his newly wedded wife also testifies, but takes the further precaution of sending Don Pedro to dispatch him. Don Pedro has his own motive for the murder, as Don Carlos prevented his declaring his passion to Elvira, Don Carlos's sister and Leoni's friend. Don Pedro bungles the job; Don Carlos disarms him; and by playing upon his fear of instant death and his love for Elvira, persuades him to switch masters. Meanwhile the brother and sister plot to fix the blame for the projected murder upon him.

Alvino arrives from Rome; swears vengeance on the Count; and kills him in a midnight duel outside his palace. When Leoni hears of his success, she proclaims herself his.

Carlos is arrested, however; to establish his innocence he is obliged to prove Alvino's guilt. Alvino is then arrested and condemned on his friend's evidence; immediately after the sentence the two lovers drink the narcotic which they expect will kill them.

Meanwhile Don Carlos tells Don Pedro that he was only a dupe, and kills him. Then, in a frenzy at the treachery into which he was betrayed, Don Carlos forces the judge at point of sword to forge the Duke's name to a pardon for Alvino. He hastens to the prison, but arrives too late. Alvino and Leoni have wakened from the narcotic; and in an ecstasy have stabbed themselves, mistaking their friend's footsteps for those of the executioner.

Chivers has atoned for Eudora with Leoni, who is not unworthy of her original, Ann Cooke. Leoni is no chicken-heart — she does not implore the protection of heaven; instead, she vows vengeance and then does something about it. She is quite willing to call in a former admirer to do the deed; she is willing to marry him if he is successful; and she will not survive his fall. But as the tragedy binds them closer together, a genuine love wells up within her, and (still dazed by the narcotic) they die at last in a *liebestod*.

None of the characters are the stock figures of

melodrama; each one has his complexity, his third dimension. The villainous Count really is attached to his wife, who in turn has her vivacity; Don Carlos is a faithful friend, but suffers his weak moment; [3] Don Pedro is ready to play the side that offers him most, but is bewildered by his passion for Elvira. Alvino is perhaps the thinnest character of the play. But each is distinct from the rest, and all stand out from the canvas.

The blank verse is generally adequate. It is rather curious to see the better lines of *Conrad and Eudora* reappearing in odd places. Eudora's cry —

> I live to view the mirror of his blood
> Reflect the deep damnation of his deeds!

becomes Leoni's oath —

> I swear that never shall my soul find rest
> Until the purple mirror of his blood
> Reflect the deep damnation of his deeds!

Chivers compresses fifteen lines of his first play —

> I would not harm the simplest thing on earth!
> As loathe to scorn, as fierce to insult given!
> [*Seven lines follow here*]
> And this wide heart, so full, it fain would burst —
> [*Three lines of a very mixed metaphor*]

[3] Perhaps he was partly suggested by Otway's Jaffier.

Shall turn an August to his life, and thirst
For every drop that palpitates his heart!

into the following five lines of his second play:

But this fond heart, so full it fain would burst,
That would not harm the simplest thing on earth —
As loth to scorn as fierce to insult given —
Until despite is on its honour thrown;
Shall turn an August to thy dying life,
And thirst for every drop that fills thy heart!

There are still pedestrian lines; there are still a few lapses into absurdity. But these are only blotches on a work essentially sound. To illustrate what Chivers could now achieve, we shall quote an entire scene — the assassination (Act III, scene iii).

Time, Midnight. In front of Count Alvar's Palace. Thunder and lightning. Enter Alvino dressed in dark clothes.

Alvino: Roll on, thou billowy trumpeter of night!
And let the clamour of thy mighty voice
Fill up the embrace of Eternity!
Let loose the roaring floodgates of thy voice,
As if the ponderous clapper, earth, tonight
Swung blindfold in the azure bell of heaven,
And toll'd the devil's demise to the stars!
Spread out the groaning helltones of thy bass,
Until the mountains echo back thy song,
And scorch the foldings of the curtained earth
With thy cloud-breaking vengeance!

Ceases thundering

All is still!
Still as the awful silence of the grave!
Now, that the mantle of the night is thrown
Around the cradle of the world, whereon
The children of her bosom do repose;
There is no time so suited to the deed,
And none so hateful to the Eye of Day!
But who shall wake him from that fatal sleep,
And bring him back to consciousness again?

Pauses

Of all the periods in the Book of Fate,
There is no fullstop to the human soul
So awful, in its nature, as that point
Which ends the final chapter of this life!
For, when we turn the last leaf over, we
Behold the everlasting blank, beyond
The which is that Eternity wherein
No light shall ever enter to the damned!
Now, then, the villain slumbers, for the last!

Alvino starts, as if to enter the Palace, when Count Alvar meets him.

Count Alvar! In the presence of the gods,
I call upon thee to defend thy life!
Judgment hath come against thee in this world,
And thou shalt liquidate thy last account!
The firey fingers of the Fiends of Hell
Can only grasp the pages of thy deeds!
Think of the beauteous rose that thou hast plucked,

And though it seemed to wither at thy feet,
The thorn is here, to stab thee to the heart!

Count Alvar draws his sword, and approaches Alvino, as if searching to know who he is.

Alvar: Alvino! is it thou?
Alvino: Leoni! — Die!

Alvino rushes upon him, and they fight.

Look on the vengeance of an injured girl,
And see the falsehood of thy perjured lips,
That poisoned all the sweetness of her own,
Shaped into eloquence to damn thy soul!
This very night thou shalt descend to hell!
Alvar: Alvino thou art mad — beside thyself!
Alvino: I have enough to make me mad — to burn
Up every atom of my raging blood,
And freeze the pulses of *thy* heart to death!
Alvar: Alvino! mark the danger thou art in!
Alvino: Behold! my sword is thirsting for thy blood
And it shall drink the river of thy life!
Alvar: Alvino! speak! — the cause?
Alvino: Leoni! — Die!

They fight again, when Alvino stabs him to the heart, and he falls.

Alvar: Alvino! may the vengeance of the gods
Descend upon thee now! — My soul is gone!

Dies. Exit Alvino, rushing from the spot.

The title-page of *Leoni* indicates that it was written in New York, and here Chivers seems to

have lived from July 20, 1838, to April 5, 1839. Then he moved to Middletown, Conn., in time to write a poem there on April 8. This poem is called " Tohoo Vabohoo " — words of derision to those who have not read *Genesis* in the original Hebrew. " Tohoo Vabohoo " signifies Chaos, and moving-day was apparently Chivers's inspiration.

Connecticut was an Elysium to Chivers; at Middletown he fixed his residence for a year at least — possibly three. He wrote poems in the woods and on the river. Though he moved away soon, he never forgot Connecticut, and later returned to the state for a longer stay.

Meanwhile he was beginning to appear in the periodicals. He sold three poems to the *New Yorker*. Henry J. Brent, the editor of the opposition *National Magazine and Republican Review* (Washington, D. C.) could not get enough of them; he published eleven poems in five months — then the magazine failed. Two of these poems dealt with an idea that haunted the poet throughout the rest of his life: the idea of the dead beloved returning in a vision of the night to her sorrowing lover upon earth. One of these, " Idealon, or the Spirit's Return " contains 151 couplets — it is too long to quote here, though the opening lines will give one an idea of it:

See how Diana climbs the hills of heaven!
Far on through all the violet fields of even,
Bright shepherdess of night! she sails to chase
Her starry lambs upon the fields of space! . . .

" My Spirit's Bride," however, may be given in full; there is good reason, as it never has been collected before.

MY SPIRIT'S BRIDE

" Cossi noi la bellezza
Che 'e vertu nostra cosi propria, come
La forza del leone
El' ingegno de l'huomo."

Her form was shadowless —
A being of pure light, who made all things
Around the shadows of her loveliness,
Like an embodied sun, whose radiance flings
A darkness on the surface of clear streams,
Around the center of his focal'd beams.

Her words were links of thought
Woven in one continuous chain of love
Around my heart, in which it had been caught,
And fastened with an image of the dove,
Whose embrace all the world could not untie,
And was an emblem of her constancy.

The sweetness of those words
Fell from her lips like music from the shell,

In labyrinthine cadence — as some bird's,
Long absent, wakes up winter with its spell,
As if the hail-song of its own desire
Were emptying its heart of notes of fire.

Her thoughts were like the swans
Of Phoebus circling on some ambient lake
At daybreak, when the morn, her sister, dawns,
And blushing, kisses all the flowers awake;
And floating on my soul's translucent sea,
Broke up its calm to waves of melody.

And as the stars of night
Are Jewels of Eternity, all hung
Around the brow of God, so they were bright,
And from my heart, around which they were strung,
Looked on the mirror of my soul's deep sea,
And saw themselves reflected burningly.

And now in this fond breast,
Rocked by the pantings of my heart, like leaves
Swayed by the Autumn winds, she takes her rest;
And as the moon looks from the purple eaves
Of heaven, upon the waves of the deep sea,
So looks my soul upon her purity.[4]

New York, January 1, 1839.

This is something like the real Chivers at last: an intensity of vision, which transmutes even words and thoughts into visible form; a belief in eternity that cannot be shaken; a naïveté that can see nothing

[4] *National Magazine and Republican Review,* March, 1839, Vol I, p. 260.

quaint in a dove-brooch (for is it not symbolic of a deathless love?); imagery of pure colors, of suns and shells and swans and seas; and a melting, almost hypnotic verbal cadence that may be faulty here and there, and yet is not quite like anything we have read before.

When the *National Magazine* failed, Chivers turned his current of verse into the hospitable columns of the local newspaper, the *Sentinel and Witness* of Middletown.[5] And the very first poem celebrated one of the great events in Chivers's life — the miraculous birth of his first child, Allegra Florence, in June, probably on June 12.[6]

It was no ordinary birth. Eight years before he had seen a vision of two angels, which has already been quoted in part. The vision had been prophetic; for now the first angel had descended to earth; the sec-

[5] Through the kindness of Miss Alice Starr, a descendant of the first editor, I have been enabled to examine the files of this rare periodical from 1830 through 1855.

[6] "To Allegra, Two Weeks After her Birth" was written on June 23, 1839, and published in the *Sentinel and Witness* (Vol. XVII, whole no. 861) on June 26. Allegra, then, was born on June 9 (two weeks before the poem was written) or on June 12 (two weeks before it was published. The latter date seems preferable because she died aged three years and four months "on the very hour of the very day on which she and I were born" (*Univercœlum,* December 9, 1848, Vol. III, p. 22). Chivers was born on Wednesday, October 18; "the very day" must refer to the day of the week; and June 12 fell upon a Wednesday.

"To Allegra Florence on the Morning of her Birth" (*Lost Pleiad*) is dated June 25, 1839, — obviously the date of composition and not the date of the occasion.

ond one (his son Eugene) followed in a year. In his child he recognized the celestial lineaments; that first angel was " in the very Angel-form of my child before and after her birth . . . her face — her *very looks* . . . so much so, that I recognized and knew the same Angel in my child after as before her birth." Could one have clearer proof of preëxistence?

> Eight years before she was born, she came down to me from Heaven in the form of an Angel. She bore a golden harp in her hand — of Heavenly Gold — on which she played most ravishingly — entrancing my soul — singing the sweetest song that I ever heard, or ever will hear, until I hear her sing it again in Heaven. . . . It was the golden melody of Heaven. I heard the Echo, or, as I may say, the Image of it, just after she had learn't the vernacular of her own land's language, after she came down from Heaven again, and was born upon the earth. . . . At first her song stole upon my soul like the shining of the evening star upon the earth — coming when we know it not, although we may be looking at it all the while — it then faded away in a soul-uplifting, melting melody, like the setting of the New Moon. . . .[7]

To this daughter Chivers now gave all the love he had formerly given his mother; the two eventually became rivals in the number of lyrics and elegies he wrote them.

[7] *Univercœlum,* December 9, 1848, Vol. III, p. 22.

"To Allegra, Two Weeks after her Birth" includes Chivers's first definite reference to Israfel, about whom Poe had already written and published one of his best-known poems. I have mentioned the possibility — but it is only a remote one — that Chivers read Poe's poem and was inspired thereby to write "Seralim." Defenders of Poe will certainly make the most of it; but I am not sure that they will be right.

The case is as follows. Poe professed to base his poem on the following quotation from the Koran: "And the angel Israfel, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures."[8] But the quotation is not in the Koran at all; it is in Sale's "Preliminary Discourse." And it is not all in Sale; for Poe had added silently the phrase "whose heart-strings are a lute." But the chances are that Poe got his inspiration neither from the Koran nor from Sale, as the quotation had previously been used by Thomas Moore as Note 293 to his popular *Lalla Rookh,* where it reads: "The angel Israfil, who has the most melodious voice of all God's creatures. — Sale."

Chivers's note on "To Allegra" is quoted cor-

[8] For Poe's variants of this motto, see Killis Campbell's edition of the *Poems* [Boston, etc., 1917] p. 205. None of them follows Moore exactly, as Chivers does.

rectly from Sale; reading *most melodious* instead of *sweetest,* and omitting " whose heart-strings are a lute." In *The Lost Pleiad* (1845) he refers twice to Israfel (pp. 5, 25), the second time giving the correct note from Sale. In *Eonchs of Ruby* (1851) there are two more references to Israfel, each time with the note from Sale (pp. 41, 81). But in *Virginalia* (1853) there are two references to the lute of heart-strings (pp. 15, 19), besides the note from Sale (p. 62) and correct references on pages 84 and 85.

It would seem, then, that Chivers had come independently upon Moore's note in *Lalla Rookh;* that the angel at once became a symbol of his belief that heaven is a state of music; and that Chivers used the symbol correctly many times before he was struck by Poe's improved quotation; and then, in all innocence, he adopted what were really Poe's words to his own verse. Chivers's use of Israfel has often been held against him as flagrant theft from Poe. I cannot believe that the accusation is just.

Another poem in the *Sentinel and Witness* also testifies for Chivers in the plagiarism controversy. Chivers always claimed that the Raven's " never more " was suggested by the refrain " No, never more! " in his " To Mother in Heaven " (*Lost Pleiad*). Chivers's volume did not appear until after

the "Raven" was published; so the defenders of Poe have dismissed Chivers's charge as mere jealousy. The poem, however, did appear in the *Sentinel and Witness* on July 24, 1839; and to it is appended a long note (not republished in *The Lost Pleiad*), which begins: "I think that Madame de Staël has said somewhere — perhaps in her *Corinne* — that the most *musical* words in the English language are — 'no more'! . . ."[9] Chivers, then, did use "never more" as a refrain before the Raven quoth it; moreover, he was impressed with its musical quality, just as Poe later was to be. But we shall not pursue the matter further in this place.

Though Chivers was writing poetry in Middletown as late as 1842 (perhaps he was there only on a visit), his contributions to the *Sentinel and Witness* stop with 1839. "The Grave of Dade," an "extract from a manuscript poem" (now lost), describes the solitary burial-place of Major Francis Langhorne Dade, who was killed in Florida with seven of his officers by an ambush of Seminole Indians, on December 28, 1835. This surprise attack was the immediate cause of the Seminole War. Dade was buried at first where he fell, sixty-five miles from Fort

[9] Profesor Killis Campbell (*Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, p. 257) records a reprint of the poem and note in the *United States Gazette* for August 1, 1839.

Brook; later his body was removed to the Marine Cemetery at St. Augustine. "The Wreck of the Home" [10] was Chivers's last contribution to the *Sentinel and Witness.* It does not deal with the domestic difficulties one might expect, but with the shipwreck of the "Home," which sailed from New York for Savannah in 1837, and meeting with violent storms was driven upon the North Carolina coast in a sinking condition. Among the dead was Senator Oliver H. Prince of Macon, Ga.

[10] *Sentinel and Witness,* December 4, 1839; dated "Philadelphia, Dec [*sic*] 27, 1839."

Chapter VII

Poe and the Lost Pleiad

IN 1840 he first came into communication with Poe. A prospectus for the *Penn Magazine* reached Chivers at New York, and he took this opportunity on August 27 to write the man whose work he had already admired. He promised to do everything in his power to help, praised Poe's project as " infinitely above any other undertaking," and added that " there can be no equivalent given to a man for the payment of divine thought." Then followed a disquisition upon " the labyrinthine vistas of the flower-gemmed solitudes of thought," with a defense of Transcendentalism. Chivers also gave Poe the much-needed advice that in critical articles he should not " lay aside the pruning-knife for the tomahawk."

But Chivers enclosed no pecuniary " equivalent " nor a definite promise of any, so Poe did not answer the letter. Indeed, he forgot it so completely that, far from laying the tomahawk aside, he flourished it over Chivers himself in the " Chapter on Autography " in *Graham's Magazine* for December, 1841.

Dr. Thomas Holley Chivers, of New York, is at the same time one of the best and one of the worst poets in America. His productions affect one as a wild dream — strange, incongruous, full of images of more than arabesque monstrosity and snatches of sweet, unsustained song. Even his worst nonsense (and some of it is horrible) has an indefinite charm of sentiment and melody. We can never be sure that there is *any* meaning in his words, — neither is there any meaning in many of our finest musical airs — but the effect is very similar in both. His figures of speech are metaphors run mad, and his grammar is often none at all. Yet there are as fine individual passages to be found in the poems of Dr. Chivers as in those of any poet whatsoever.

His MS. resembles that of P. P. Cooke [1] very nearly, and in poetical character the two gentlemen are closely akin. Mr. Cooke is, by much, the more *correct,* while Dr. Chivers is sometimes the more poetic.

Mr. C. always sustains himself; Dr. C. never.

Chivers was being thus scalped for poems not as yet (and quite possibly never) published: they were poems which Poe, as editor, had rejected. Chivers protested by letter; unnoticed, he protested again, this time including some poems for *Graham's Magazine.* And Poe at last answered his correspondent on June 6, 1842. The plans for a *Penn Magazine* had

[1] Philip Pendleton Cooke (1816–1850) was the author of *The Froissart Ballads* which contained the feebly sentimental and immensely popular ballad, "Florence Vane."

been revived. "As I have no money myself," he wrote, "it will be absolutely necessary that I procure a partner who has some pecuniary means. I mention this to you, for it is not impossible that you yourself may have both the will and the ability to join me." Chivers seems to have overlooked this part of the letter for an earlier passage of apology: "Among all my correspondents there is *not one* whose good opinion I am more anxious to retain than your own. . . . The paper had scarcely gone to press before I saw and acknowledged to myself the injustice I had done you — an injustice which it is my full purpose to repair at the first opportunity. What I said of your grammatical errors arose from some imperfect recollections of one or two poems sent to the first volume of the *Southern Literary Messenger*. But in more important respects, I now deeply feel that I have wronged you by a hasty opinion. You will not suppose me insincere in saying that I look upon some of your late pieces as the finest I *ever read*. I allude especially to your poem about Shelley, and the one of which the *refrain* is 'She came from Heaven to tell me she was blest.'[2] Upon reading these composi-

[2] The "poem about Shelley" was probably "The Wife's Lament for her Husband Lost at Sea," which Poe quoted in his review of *The Lost Pleiad;* though in that volume there is another, entitled "Shelley." Chivers wrote two poems with the refrain which Poe quoted: one, "The Heavenly Vision"

tions I felt the necessity of our being friends. Will you accept my proffer of friendship? "

Poe was unfortunate in that his friendship with Chivers always seemed to be roused only when there was a chance of getting money; nevertheless, he was sincere. He really liked the poems he praised, and for long used to recite them at his readings. In his review of *The Lost Pleiad,* he repaired his injustice to Chivers, as he had promised. And it is not very probable that he would have invited Chivers to become his partner in the *Penn Magazine* if he had not felt considerable confidence in Chivers's talents.

Chivers answered Poe's letter immediately (July 12, 1842). His father had died, and as the estate was to be divided August 1, he was leaving for the south. " I receive with grateful pleasure your polite remarks in regard to the autograph article "; because it seems that he had so highly praised Poe as poet and critic to Southern friends that they had taken the squib seriously, and really believed Chivers to be " a fit subject for the Insane Hospital." As to money for the magazine, Chivers merely promised to get subscribers. A rich man, he was used to staving off re-

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(*The Lost Pleiad,* p. 19), dated December 25, 1841; and the vastly superior " Uranothen " (*Virginalia,* p. 97), dated April 8, 1842. That Poe meant the former is proved by his quoting its title in his letter to Chivers, July 10, 1844.

quests for money; besides, he probably was suspicious of any magazine to be run by the erratic Poe. But Poe, undeterred, sent another letter with the most alluring statistics. He accepted three poems for *Graham's Magazine,* which were published the following year. There was also some talk about "The Mighty Dead," a long elegy of Chivers's, which Poe praised highly, but could not get published in *Graham's* on account of its length. Then the manuscript got lost; and lost it probably remained for some time, as it was not published in Chivers's next volume, but did eventually appear in *Eonchs of Ruby.*

An unexpected blow now turned the whole course of Chivers's mental life. His parents were dead, his brothers and sisters seem to have remained south, so all his ardent affections were centered on his wife and three children. He was particularly proud of his eldest daughter, the blue-eyed and intellectually precocious Allegra Florence, whom he thought "a living Hymn of Beauty, sung to the Glory of God."

The tragedy fell upon his birthday, October 18, 1842.

While she was walking out with her father (which she did every day for her health), she complained of being

tired. On ascending the stairs, she said, "Father, I am too heavy!" That night she was taken ill, and died the next morning! The last word that she said to her father was, "Father, give me some water!" In a few moments afterwards she was in the land of the Immortals — wafted gently on the wings of Angels up to the golden Eden-trees of God, where she now sings among the enraptured hosts of Heaven.[3]

She had been struck down by a virulent form of typhoid. Her father's anguish as a parent hindered his skill as a physician (at least, so he reproached himself later); he could do nothing to check the swift advance of the fatal symptoms.[4] Then, in the very midst of the agony he heard the identical music which had accompanied the vision of his daughter eight years before her birth!

This heavenly language I heard again on her deathbed, when she lifted up her dying, deep blue eyes to mine, filled with the light of Heaven which can never pass away, and said beseechingly, *"Father, give me some water!"* Then did I hear the same sorrowful, imploring wail of the song that she sang to me when she came down to me in spirit with the golden harp in her hand. The rising, fading, falling, fainting sweetness of the song that she sang, as she went away into Heaven, was like the dy-

[3] *Georgia Citizen*, "The Loved and Lost," June 25, 1858.

[4] See *The Lost Pleiad* pp. 28–29, 350–353, etc. This poem was dated October 18, 1842, to commemorate the date, and may have been written in part that very night.

ing away into an echo of the song of the soul of him whose hope is full of immortality. . . .

It was antetypal of her life as it was typified to me upon the earth, for you must recollect that it was preluded out of her lips and out of her harp in the golden radiance of pure joy; then, after it had overflowed my soul with its divine effulgence, it died away into a dove-like, wailing echo, on whose billowy modulations her glorified spirit ascended again into Heaven.[5]

Prostrated, Chivers took her body to Georgia for burial, vainly attempting to find relief from his anguish in poetry. Among other things, he wrote a long rhapsody, " The Lost Pleiad," which became the title-poem of his next volume. It is a terrible poem, a direct outpouring of his despair. The death-agony of his daughter is described, symptom by symptom: sunken eyes, fetid breath, blue nails. Through analogy with the flower and the butterfly, Chivers then asserts his belief in immortality — the only chance of reunion — his last mental prop. The kindest thing that we can say of the poem as a whole is that it demonstrates the old theory that immediate, untransmuted emotion usually makes very bad poetry indeed. But Chivers is never wholly bad. " The Lost Pleiad " contains several passages like the following ones:

[5] *The Univercœlum,* Vol. III, p. 22.

Thy spirit's soul-delighting face
Was smothered in the soft embrace
Of Angels, when they, from the skies,
Leant down with their sweet melodies,
In rapturous joy, to hail thee theirs,
And by the keen light of the stars
Beheld thee, like a snow-white Dove,
Ascending through the heavens above
And caught thee, frantic with delight,
And bore thee, singing, out of sight. . . .

I sometimes see thee, in my dreams,
Beside those clear Elysian streams
Which flow out of the crystal fountains
Between the holy sapphire mountains
Of God's Eternity, whereon
Is built His Everlasting Throne.
Thou wast, in this dark world below,
The shadow of what thou art now. . . .

He has planted four young cedars at the corners of her tomb, with the inscription:

We are four mourners standing round
This holy, consecrated ground —
Four verdant Angels round the head
And feet of her who now is dead —
  Whose soul is in the heavens on high —
With wings of evergreen outspread
  To emblem that which cannot die.

Another elegy, "To Allegra Florence in Heaven," was written December 12, 1842; this was the poem which was later to have its effect upon "The Raven."

Meanwhile more sorrows were overshadowing his life. Though another daughter was born shortly after Allegra Florence's death [6] within the year his three remaining children died at Oaky Grove.[7]

After the death of his oldest daughter, Chivers sent a pathetic letter to Poe, telling of his loss; but being preoccupied with his grief, he forgot to include or even mention any assistance for the *Penn Magazine*. Poe ignored the letter. Chivers remained in Georgia, and wrote Poe twice again in 1843. Still Poe was silent. At last Chivers seems to have understood how it was that he had fallen from favor; for on May 15, 1844, he wrote a fourth time, asking about the magazine. "I expect to receive my part of my father's estate in July, and should like to unite with you, provided it would be to my interest to do so." A large part of the letter was devoted to a discussion of Transcendentalism.

[6] *The Lost Pleiad*, pp. 257–260.

[7] Several accounts, notably Benton's (p. 65), seem to think that all four children died simultaneously. But in the Chivers family Bible, the deaths are recorded as follows: "Allegra Florence Chivers died Oct. 18, 1842. Eugene Percy Chivers died January [ ] 1848. Ada Lallage Chivers died April 2, 1848. Thomas Holley Chivers [Jr.] died April 7, 1848."

Poe's interest was at last rearoused; his answer was dated July 10, 1844. As usual, he began with an apology for not answering earlier — this time because he had accidentally filed Chivers's letters among those already answered. As for the magazine, its title was changed to *The Stylus,* and he was only awaiting the hour when success would be a certainty. "I have been lately lecturing on 'American Poetry' and have drawn profuse tears from large and intellectual audiences by the recital of your 'Heavenly Vision' — which I can never weary of repeating." But as for the Transcendentalists — and Poe continued at a length which shows that he wished to be interesting to the Southerner. Yet not enough to keep up the correspondence; for Chivers's letter of August 6 in response to Poe's arguments went unanswered; and so did an appeal for another such letter on September 24. However, *Graham's Magazine* again accepted two poems, perhaps on Poe's recommendation.

But soon the poets were to meet. Down in Georgia, early in 1845, Chivers probably heard that his correspondent had become overnight the famous Mr. Poe, who had written a masterpiece, "The Raven," which was making everybody shudder. Spring arrived, and with it Chivers went north, to New York,

to get his new volume, *The Lost Pleiad,* printed. Coming from his printers in Nassau Street, he met Poe, thoroughly intoxicated, and helped him home. On the way they met Lewis Gaylord Clark, editor of the *Knickerbocker Magazine,* whom Poe tried to attack. Clark appreciated the situation and extricated himself as politely as possible, revenging (and damning) himself by a brutal review of Poe's poems the following January. Chivers accompanied Poe all the way home and delivered him to Mrs. Clemm. "The next day, when I called to see him, he was not to be found. On the next, when I called, he was in bed pretending to be sick, but with nothing in the world the matter with him — his sole object for lying there being to avoid the delivering of the Poem which he had promised — for he was then reading Macaulay's *Miscellanies.* I then hired a carriage and took him out to ride." [8] From which we may judge that Chivers, for all his good-hearted hero-worship, was no dupe.

But he got at least a taste of what he longed for: on another day they had a real discussion of English poetry. Poe considered Tennyson "not only the greatest Poet in England, at present, but the greatest

[8] Chivers's own account, quoted from Woodberry's *Poe-Chivers Papers* (*Century Magazine,* January, 1903, Vol. LXV, p. 443).

one, in many senses, that England, or any other Country ever produced."

Chivers never allowed hero-worship to interfere with his poetic judgments.

" My God! Poe! how can you say that? " he asked in surprise. " Why, his Poems are as effeminate as a phlegmatic fat baby. He is the most perfectly Greek-statuesque, if you please, in his conceptions, of any man that has ever lived since the days of Pericles."

But Poe was ready with his reply: " That is just what constitutes him one of the greatest geniuses that ever lived. Passion has nothing to do with pure Poetry. . . " and off he went on his favorite theory, in spite of Chivers's objections.[9] After Tennyson, Poe placed Horne, whose *Orion* was greater than *Paradise Lost;* the rest of the poets were not worth naming. Chivers named Beddoes in offhand protest, then quoted Shelley, whom Poe thought too " unfettered." Poe also thought that Keats's principal fault was " the grotesqueness of his abandon." He approved of Elizabeth Barrett's *Drama of Exile,* however, and dedicated to her the edition of his poems that year. Chivers looked her up; and on June 10 wrote a sonnet, " On Reading Mrs. Browning's ' Drama of Exile,' " which was later published in

[9] *Century Magazine,* January, 1903, pp. 444, 447.

Virginalia. In November, 1845, Chivers published another sonnet "On Reading Miss Barrett's Poems" in *Simms' Magazine;* the next month it was republished in the *Broadway Journal.*

Then *The Lost Pleiad* appeared. Its preface was dated July 18, 1845; and on August 2, Poe took the pains to review it favorably for the *Broadway Journal.*

> This volume is evidently the honest and fervent utterance of an exquisitely sensitive heart which has suffered much and long. The poems are numerous, but the thesis is one — *death* — the death of beloved friends. The poet seems to have dwelt among the shadows of tombs, until his very soul has become a shadow. Here, indeed, is no mere Byronic affection of melancholy. No man who has ever mourned the loss of a dear friend, can read these poems without instantly admitting the palpable truth which glows upon every page.
>
> The tone of the composition is, in these latter days, a marvel, and as a marvel we commend it to our readers. It belongs to the first era of a nation's literature — to the era of impulse — in contra-distinction to the era of criticism — to the Chaucerian rather than to the Cowperian days. As for the *trans*-civilization epoch, Dr. Chivers' poems have really nothing of affinity with it — and this we look upon as the greatest miracle of all. Is it not, indeed, a miracle that to-day a poet shall compose sixty or seventy poems, in which there shall be discoverable *no* taint — absolutely none — of either Byron, or Shelley, or

Wordsworth, or Coleridge, or Tennyson? In a word, the volume before us is the work of that *rara avis,* an educated, passionate, yet unaffectedly simple-minded and single-minded man, writing from his own vigorous impulses — from the necessity of giving utterance to poetic passion — and thus writing *not* to mankind, but solely to himself. The whole volume has, in fact, the air of a rapt soliloquy.

We have leisure this week only to give, without comment, a few extracts at random — but we shall take an opportunity of recurring to the subject.

Next, Poe quoted " The Wife's Lament for her Husband Lost at Sea "; lines 216–254 of " The Lost Pleiad "; the three final stanzas of " The Soul's Destiny "; and the " Sonnet — To Isa Sleeping." He then concluded:

The poems of Dr. Chivers abound in what must undoubtedly be considered as gross demerit, if we admit the prevalent canons of criticism. But it may safely be maintained that these prevalent canons have, in great part, no surer foundation than arrant conventionality. Be these things as they may, we have no hesitation in saying that we consider many of the pieces in the volume before us as possessing merit of a very lofty — if not of the very loftiest order.

Now Poe was extremely sensitive upon the question of plagiarism; so his emphasis on Chivers's originality is of interest. *The Lost Pleiad* contains

two references to Israfel; the motto from Bishop Henry King which Poe had used for " The Assignation "; a poem in the " Raven " meter; and one with " Nevermore " for a refrain. Was Poe allowing Chivers liberties on account of possible support in his magazine ventures? If so, there was no need to *stress* Chivers's originality, or even to mention it at all. Or was Poe afraid that a comparison of dates would turn to his own disadvantage? The question would seem to rest between these two alternatives; but there is another solution, the true one, I believe: Poe did not think anything about it. But the point will be discussed later.

The Lost Pleiad opens with the title-poem, eight hundred and twenty-three lines of agony over Allegra Florence. All the other poems are short lyrics, for many of which Young's *Night Thoughts* furnished mottoes. Chivers selected his gloomiest poems for his book. There are elegies and laments on his daughter, his mother, his sister; on Shakspere and Shelley and Keats; on Washington and Jefferson. There are poems about newly-made orphans and dying husbands; there are sonnets to death and the grave. To be sure, as one turns the pages, one sees lyrics celebrating love and spring and children; but the preponderance of elegies remains overwhelming.

The improvement of Chivers's technique is marked. He has disciplined his early experimental self down to a simplicity and directness that are more subtle than one thinks.

THE SOUL'S DESTINY

"For God created Man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of His own eternity." — *Wisdom.*

"Eternity is in thine years." — *Byron.*

"We shall not die." — *Habakkuk.*

[*The Question*]

Soul of my being! Life! my Breath!
I long from Thee to know,
When this sad heart shall bow to death,
Where shall my spirit go?
I ask Thee now (for unto me
An answer *must* be given):
Are we to live? or die? or be
In neither Hell nor Heaven?

Say! are we doomed to wander here,
The ghosts of what we were —
Watching above each sepulchre
The form that moulders there?
Or shall we sleep beneath the sod
When this dark life shall cease?
Or shall we soar away to God,
And dwell with Him in peace?

Thomas Holley Chivers

[*The Answer*]

Raised from the earth, thy flight shall be
  Above the rolling spheres,
On God's own breath, which gave to thee
  The gift of endless years.
High in the realms of endless rest
  Immortal thou shalt be,
Surveying all the heavenly blest
  That fill Eternity.

The spirit that can so survive
  The dust in its decay
Has power within itself to live
  Through Everlasting Day;
For that which has the power to cause
  The body thus to be
Is subject not to Nature's laws,
  But lives eternally.

Thus shalt thou leave this world of sin,
  And soar into the sky,
Where Angels wait to let thee in
  To immortality.
And those who had nowhere to rest
  Their wearied limbs at night
Shall lay their heads upon God's breast,
  And sleep in sweet delight.

There, Death's dark shades not more shall be
  The mystic veil between
The World which we desire to see
  And that which we have seen.

There father, brother, husband, wife —
  There mother, sister, friend —
Shall be united, as in life,
  In joys that never end.

No pangs shall there disturb the thrills
  Which animate thy breast;
But Angels, on the Heavenly Hills,
  Shall sing thee into rest.
No slanderous tongue shall there inflame
  Thy heart with words of gall;
For all shall be in Heaven the same,
  And God shall be in all.

Oaky Grove, Ga., *April 3d,* 1840.

Here Chivers has a perfect control of his material. He relies on no striking adjectives, no intoxicating rhythms, no metaphysical conceits. He has abjured all *tours-de-force*. He uses only the simplest words in their normal order, a cadence that carries the meaning without obtruding, and rhymes that fall so easily into place that they seem inevitable. This was one of the poems that Poe selected for especial praise.

A fragment from " To Shakspere Dying " got into the columns of the magazines,[10] where it wandered about vaguely without any author's name, and with a new title.

[10] As late as September, 1851, it appeared in *Harper's Magazine,* Vol. III, p. 573; the editor supposed that it was written by a German poet.

THE SHIP OF DEATH

By the shore of Time, now lying
  On the inky flood beneath,
Patiently, thou Soul undying!
  Waits for thee the SHIP OF DEATH!

He who on that vessel starteth,
  Sailing from the sons of men,
To the friends from whom he parteth
  Never more returns again!

From her mast no flag is flying,
  To denote from whence she came;
She is known unto the dying.
  AZRAEL is her captain's name.

Not a word was ever spoken,
  On that dark, unfathom'd sea;
Silence there is so unbroken,
  She herself seems not to be!

Silent, then, in darkness lonely,
  Doth the SOUL put forth alone,
While the wings of angels only
  Waft her to a LAND UNKNOWN.

Chivers's more sensuous efforts may be illustrated by one of his many sonnets.

SONNET, — TO ISA SLEEPING

" Sleep on, and dream of Heaven awhile! " — *Rogers.*

As graceful as the Babylonian willow
Bending, at noontide, over some clear stream
In Palestine, in beauty did she seem
Upon the cygnet-down of her soft pillow;
And now her breast heaved like some gentle billow
Swayed by the presence of the full round moon —
Voluptuous as the summer South at noon —
Her cheeks as rosy as the radiant dawn,
When heaven is cloudless! When she breathed, the air
Around was perfume! Timid as the fawn,
And meeker than the dove, her soft words were
Like gentle music heard at night, when all
Around is still — until the soul of care
Was soothed, as noontime by some waterfall.

New York, *April 10th,* 1838.

One more poem should be included here, because of its influence, many years later, upon Swinburne.

SONG TO ISA SINGING

Upon thy lips now lies
  The music-dew of love,
And in thy deep blue eyes,
  More mild than Heaven above,
  The meekness of the dove.

More sweet than the perfume
  Of snow-white jessamine

When it is first in bloom,
  Is that sweet breath of thine,
  Which mingles now with mine.

Like an Æolian sound
  Out of an ocean shell,
Which fills the air around
  With music, such as fell
  From lips of ISRAFEL;*

Over thy lips now flow,
  Out of thy heart, for me,
A song which none can know
  But him who hopes to be
  Forever more with thee.

And like the snow-white Dove
  Frightened from earth at even —
On tempests borne above —
  My swift-winged soul is driven
  Upon thy song to heaven! [11]

* "The angel Israfel, who has the most melodious voice of all God's creatures." — *Sale.* [T. H. C.]

[11] Poe, in a letter of June 6, 1842, spoke of grammatical errors; Chivers endorsed this letter as follows: "The 'grammatical errors' to which Poe alludes here is the want of an *s* in a verse in the poem entitled 'Song to Isa Singing,' as follows: 'The song which none can know,' etc. *Song* ought to have been written *songs,* evidently a mistake in the copying. The poem was published in the *Broadway Journal* [August 2, 1845, Vol. II, p. 49]. In the original it's 'Sweet songs.'" (Harrison's *Life and Letters of Poe,* Vol. II, p. 114). This change appears in all subsequent versions. Poe liked the poem well enough to read it, with "The Heavenly Vision," at a lecture on poetry at the Stuyvesant Institute, New York. Professor Newcomer has noted its influence upon Swinburne in *The Sewanee Review,* January, 1904, Vol. XII.

The Lost Pleiad seems to have gone fairly well at first, in Chivers's estimation. "My Poems," he wrote Poe from Georgia (September 9, 1845), "have been spoken of in the very highest terms in this state by all who have seen them. Several papers have republished your notice, at the same time that *you* were spoken of in the highest terms. They have praised the 'Heavenly Vision,' and the Poem 'To Isa Singing' beyond measure. . . . Passages in the 'Lost Pleiad' have been very much lauded. Some like the 'Soul's Destiny,' 'To Allegra Florence in Heaven,' 'To My Mother in Heaven,' and the Poem on 'Hearing Von Weber's Last Waltz.'" Poe's notice, however, could not stampede the critics, who praised some things and disliked others. Simms[12] lauded and quoted "To Isa Sleeping" and "To Isa Singing," but he protested against Chivers's morbid subjectivity, and said that his title was borrowed from Letitia E. Landon's familiar poem. The title was rather popular just then: Simms himself had used it in his anonymous *Southern Passages and Pictures* (1839).[13]

[12] *Southern and Western Monthly Magazine and Review,* October 1845, Vol. II, pp. 277–281.

[13] "The Lost Pleiad" is the title of one of John G. C. Brainard's *Occasional Pieces* (1825); his poems, which were later edited by Whittier, had quite a vogue. Mrs. Hemans's poem of that name appeared in her *Lays of Many Lands* (1826?) with a motto from Byron: "Like the Lost Pleiad seen no more below." Miss Landon's poem was included in her *Venetian Bracelet* (1829) and became quite popular. S.M.C. contributed a poem, "The

But Chivers had used the image of the Lost Pleiad in his Transylvania days (*Path of Sorrow,* p. 111) and thrice in *Nacoochee* (pp. 45, 60, 63); and to his death Chivers remained tenacious of his images.

Sales evidently fell off rapidly; later (April 10, 1852) Chivers wrote Simms: " I kept locked up for seven years, and gave only to a few friends, my *Lost Pleiad.*"

Meanwhile there was another exchange of letters between Chivers and Poe. Chivers wrote vaguely of $50, and also warned Poe against intemperance: " What would God think of that Angel who should condescend to dust his feet in the ashes of Hell? " Poe humbly answered (August 29): " I have not touched a drop of the ' ashes ' since you left N. Y. — & I am resolved not to touch a drop as long as I live." Otherwise, his letter is a little petulant over the absent $50. Chivers answered, in the letter quoted above, that his book was being well noticed. " It is Paradise all about here where my wife is. I dream mighty dreams in her presence sometimes. I will tell you one of them some of these days. Her footsteps

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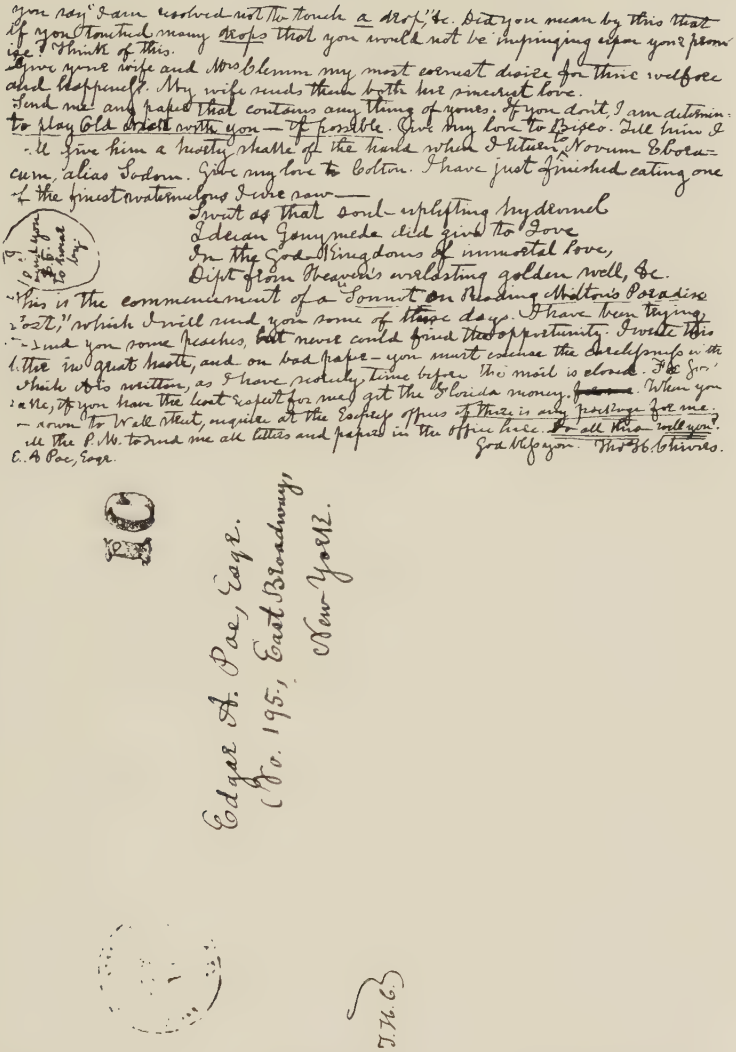
Lost Pleiad " to the *New England Weekly Review* for August 9, 1830, while Whittier was editing it. Another poem with that title is in George Hill's *Ruins of Athens* (1839) — the same year that Simms' verse was published. Henry B. Hirst's " Lost Pleiad " (*The Penance of Roland,* 1849) is worth mentioning as Hirst was often influenced by Chivers. Professor Killis Campbell (p. 206) mentions poems on that subject by Stoddard and Stedman.



you say "I am resolved not to touch a drop" &c. Did you mean by this that if you touched many drops that you would not be infringing upon your promise? think of this.
Give your wife and Mrs Clemm my most earnest desire for their welfare and happiness. My wife sends them both her sincerest love.
Send me any paper that contains any thing of yours. If you don't, I am determined to play Old Orbit with you — if possible. Give my love to Briggs. Tell him I will give him a master shake of the hand when I return to Novum Eboracum, alias Sodom. Give my love to Colton. I have just finished eating one of the finest watermelons I ever saw —

Sweet as that soul uplifting hydromel
I dream Ganymede did grind to Jove
In the God-Kingdoms of immortal love,
Dipt from Heaven's everlasting golden well, &c.

This is the commencement of a "Sonnet on Reading Milton's Paradise Lost," which I will send you some of these days. I have been trying and trying for some speeches, but never could find the opportunity. I write this letter in great haste, and on bad paper — you must excuse the dreadfulness of the ink. Write me a letter, as I have recently, time before the mail is closed. P.S. Sir: I think it is written, as I have recently, time before the mail is closed. P.S. Sir: I think it is written, as I have recently, time before the mail is closed. P.S. Sir: I think it is written

pave the world with happiness — that is, the world wherein I live." Money? Of course! — as soon as possible. Not for literature, for friendship! "You say you have not touched a drop of the ashes of Hell since I left New York. *That's a man.* For God's sake — " and so the letter continued. Somehow Poe dropped the correspondence again. Chivers wrote on; still Poe was silent. Then on October 30, Chivers again recurred to the question of money. Once more Poe tried; he was now borrowing money right and left to buy the *Broadway Journal:* $140 was needed by January 1. "For Heaven's sake, my dear friend, help me *now* if you can — *at once* — for now is my time of peril. If I live until next month I shall be beyond the need of aid. If you *can* send me the $45, for Heaven's sake do it, by return of mail — or if not all, a part."

At this crucial point, the story breaks. There is a gap in the correspondence. We may never know whether Chivers sent the money or not. But if he did, it proved useless; for Poe broke down in his project, and in his health as well. Sick, poverty-stricken, and completely baffled, he retired to the Fordham cottage; and there in July, 1846, he received in one mail six letters from Chivers, who had not known of his changed address. Poe answered them on the twenty-

second, in a spirit of true gratefulness. For once (and it is the more notable, considering his situation at that time) there was no mention of money. "Your professions of friendship I reciprocate from the inmost depths of my heart. Except yourself I have never met the man for whom I felt that intimate *sympathy* (of intellect as well as soul) which is the sole basis of friendship. Believe me that never, for one moment, have I doubted the sincerity of your *wish* to assist me. There is not one word you say that I do not *see* coming up from the depths of your heart."

Poe meant this. Those six letters, arriving at a time when he felt deserted by all his former friends, were none too many. But as usual, he let the correspondence lapse. Chivers wrote at least twice more, once inviting Poe to come south. "I will take care of you as long as you live — although, if ever there was a perfect mystery on earth you are one — and one of the most mysterious." Nothing came of this; the letters lost interest; and the periods between them grew. The last reference we find is in Poe's fragment of a letter to Mrs. Clemm in September, 1849: "I got a sneaking letter today from Chivers." Was the doctor again evading requests for money?

Chapter VIII

Psychical Adventures

LONG since, Chivers had escaped from the bitter Baptist-Methodist rivalry in Georgia to the dreams of Swedenborg and the dignity and peace of Boston Transcendentalism, both of which confirmed the Eternal Verities which Chivers had discovered for himself.

And now a new movement, half science, half religion, swept the country. This was Mesmerism. Although the French Academy of Medicine announced on October 1, 1840, that no more communications on the subject of "animal magnetism" would be received, as it was a subject to be classified with perpetual motion and squaring the circle, none the less itinerent mesmerists wandered all over America, giving public exhibitions of their mysterious powers. The ignorant orthodox, quoting *Exodus* xxii, 18, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," sometimes mobbed them; the village doctors, after pinching out bits of the flesh of the entranced sub-

jects, to make them wince, would shake their heads and pronounce themselves unconvinced; and some of the city physicians were broad-minded enough to be interested in the possibility of painless operations — anæsthesia not yet having been discovered. But as with all such movements, its truths were totally denied by one faction, while they were shamelessly exaggerated by the other.

Poe, of course, had taken advantage of the excitement by working mesmeric data into fantastic tales purporting to be unvarnished records of facts. " Mesmeric Revelation " appeared in the *Columbia Magazine* for August, 1844, and " The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar " in the *American Whig Review* for December, 1845. The last story was so successful that it was almost a hoax. The *Broadway Journal* reprinted the story, standing ambiguously on its dignity when the question of veracity was raised. The story appeared twice in England; one of the English publishers stated that " while it was of so extraordinary a nature as almost to pass belief," yet " credence is given to it in America." [1] This was sufficient evidence for Mrs. Mary Ann Atwood, the celebrated foundress of the modern mystical school of alchemy, who affirmed, in her anonymous *Early Magnetism*

[1] Poe's Works (Virginia edition), Vol. VI, p. 292.

in its Higher Relations to Humanity (London, 1846, p. 116), that the case of M. Valdemar was "well and publicly attested." The Abbé Jacques Paul Migne, founder of *L'Imprimerie Catholique,* included the same case in his *Dictionary of Popular Superstitions.*

Inevitably the imagination of all the pioneers of the soul was fascinated by this experimental proof of the power of mind over matter. Mesmerism was to deal the triumphant death-blow to all materialism; the mysteries so long concealed in man at last were being made plain forever.

In the midst of the excitement appeared the striking figure of Andrew Jackson Davis, the "Poughkeepsie Seer." [2]

This fragile and naïve country boy had been mesmerized as an experiment; and his clairvoyance was so astounding that in an extraordinarily short while he was known from ocean to ocean. The first time he was mesmerized, in December, 1843, he discovered a Böhme-like power of insight into the essences

[2] Today the name of Davis is little known, even among the Spiritualists. But his twenty and more volumes still command their prices in second-hand bookstores. Lowell included an account of him in the *Fable for Critics* (lines 1379–1383). "The Poughkeepsie Seer his Prophecies" was one of the attempted cures of poor Professor Ptthmllnsprtts after he had seen a water-baby, in Kingsley's *Water Babies* (Ch. IV). Perhaps the latest literary reference to Davis is a passing mention of his "harmonial philosophy" in Joyce's *Ulysses,* p. 478.

of everything in the universe, but especially into the human organism. Under the guidance of the spirits of Galen and Swedenborg, who revealed themselves three months later, he suddenly devoted his strange powers entirely towards the healing of the sick. The human frame was transparent to his entranced eyes; he beheld its ills and knew what substance had the power to correct them. His cures were reported as wholly successful. After doing this for a year and a half, he abruptly discovered a mission more important yet, — that of solving the problem of the universe. And on November 28, 1845, he began to dictate his famous *Principles of Nature* while in a trance, finishing it January 25, 1847. It was a complete and logical system of the universe (chiefly according to Swedenborg and Fourier), which was at once attacked.[3] Its clarity and dignity, its emphasis on reason (which well before Renan did not stick at a rationalized life of Christ), its proclamation that "whatever the judgement cannot sanction, the

[3] Besides sermons and articles in periodicals, at least four books attacking the *Principles of Nature* were published: L. W. Billington's *Review of A. J. Davis's Revelations* (Rochester, N. Y., 1848), which was inspired by religious hatred; Professor George Bush's *Davis' Revelations Revealed: being a Critical Examination of the Character and Claims of that Work in its Relations to the Teachings of Swedenborg* (pub. before 1850; I have not seen this book); James Leander Scott's *Anti-Pantheist,* Vol. I, "Pantheism — A. J. Davis Reviewed" (2nd ed., Dayton, O., 1856) — another attack by the church militant; and Sabin Hough's *Remarks on the 'Revelations' of A. J. Davis, Clairvoyant* (Columbus, O.: no date) — another Swedenborgian critique.

Divine Mind never created" (p. 523), and its belief in science rather than the Bible as the ultimate authority — all these appealed strongly to the common sense of the day. But allied to these reasonablenesses was a complete faith in the factual value of vision — a vision that could escape from its house of flesh, to explore the astronomical universe and even the Eternity beyond. One could solve all mysteries of the cosmos by the power of mind alone!

Poe, of course, could not miss the amazing Davis; in *Graham's Magazine* (May-June, 1845), he remarked: "There surely can*not* be 'More things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamt of' (oh, Andrew Jackson Davis!) 'in your philosophy,'" — a remark which is really noncommittal. Poe attended his lectures, and on January 19, 1846, actually paid a call to the Poughkeepsie Seer, who thus described the interview:

> His remarkable face bore traces of feminine mental characteristics; but upon his spacious brow there sparkled the gems of rare endowments. In his critical eye, however, I observed an ominous shadow! Thinking to myself, I said: "This person's talent immolates his genius." At length he informed us that his name was "Edgar A. Poe." During an interior conversation, I recollect of assuring him that, though he had poetically imagined the whole of his published article upon the answers of a clair-

voyant, the main ideas conveyed by it concerning "ultimates" were strictly and philosophically true. At the close of this interview he departed, and never came again.[4]

Elsewhere, Davis published the notes he had made on the spot:

Edgar A. Poe's personal presence conveys me, in *feeling,* to a beauteous field, or to a kind of blooming valley, surrounded by a high wall of craggy mountains. So high appear these mountains that the sun can scarcely shine over their summits during any portion of the twenty-four hours. There is, too, something unnatural in his voice, and something dispossessing in his manners. He is, in spirit, a foreigner. My sympathies are strangely excited. There are conflicting breathings of commanding power in his mind. But as he walked in through the hall, and again when he left, at the conclusion of his call, I saw a perfect *shadow* of himself in the air in front of him, as though the sun was constantly shining behind and casting shadows before him, causing the singular appearance of one walking into a dark fog produced by himself.[5]

The effect of Andrew Jackson Davis on Poe is to be found in *Eureka: A Prose Poem* (1848), a brilliant yet mad work not astonishingly dissimilar in scheme to *The Principles of Nature.* Davis had al-

[4] *The Magic Staff; An Autobiography of Andrew Jackson Davis,* New York, 1857, p. 317.

[5] *Events in the Life of a Seer,* New York, 1868, pp. 18–19. Another reference to this meeting is to be found in Davis's *Answers to Ever-Recurring Question* (7th ed.), Boston, 1873, p. 63.

ways yielded himself up to the power of his subconscious; Poe, his brain reeling to its fall, attempted in a mighty effort of pure, cold logic, to solve the problem of the astronomical universe and its relation to God. Perhaps Davis's theory that inspiration was truth — that poetic insight might indeed be able to reveal the ultimate secrets of nature — aided Poe's attempt. At any rate, both books are written on that theory; both books pretend to solve the same problem; and both books (we need hardly add) are nonsense as science.

Simultaneously with Poe's *Eureka* (or perhaps a month later) appeared Chivers's *Search After Truth; or, A New Revelation of the Psycho-Physiological Nature of Man* (New York, 1848). Chivers was living in Georgia, and quite probably had no idea that Poe was writing *Eureka;* yet he, too, was attempting to solve the problem of the universe by sheer power of logic. There is no further resemblance between the books, beyond the fact that both men were stimulated by Davis to have faith in the transcendent powers of their own brains to explain the cosmos. The coincidence is merely another proof of the susceptibility of two contemporary poets to the same stimulus. Yet Chivers, in tribute to his friend, named the questioner in his book " Politian."

Chivers, long aware of his subconscious mind, identified it with Eternity, or Heaven. His sense of its independent activity led him to believe that it was populated; and its inhabitants actually presented themselves before his eyes (when those organs were divinely "couched," or adjusted, to the immaterial). Some of these inhabitants he identified as dead relations and friends, now glorified. Symbolic visions, odd bits of verse, and persistent strains of music he could perceive in the nighttime; these came from this inner world; and if he listened to music or wrote poetry, he felt himself uplifted near to this supernal realm.

Now, after much poring over ancient books, he had worked the whole thing out; *Search After Truth* contained his conclusions. They are as follows:

> Something must have existed from all eternity, because (as Cudworth says) "if ever there was nothing, there never could have been anything" (p. 7). God is this original, immaterial substance; his mind contained the archetypes both of matter and of man. Both are thus immortal and can never be annihilated.
>
> The Creation was "the result of the exhuberant [*sic*] overflowing fulness of the immortal life of the Deity" (p. 18). Matter was realized; motion must have been communicated to it (as matter never starts moving by itself);

and it could be communicated only by a superior power, — God. Man is composed of a duality, soul and body, which have distinct natures. The soul is the real *personality;* the body is its instrument; and their combination forms the *person,* which dies when the soul, or *personality,* is released by death.

Thought is a vital power of the soul, superior to and antecedent to the body, and continuing after its separation from the body. The body and mind must have different essences as their respective attributes are extension (spatial) and thought (non-spatial), between which there is absolutely no relationship. Matter is perceived by the senses of the body, ideas by the mind. The senses cannot form an idea; they cannot perceive the soul of God; yet we have ideas of them both. Therefore, in spite of Locke, all knowledge does not come through the senses. We may study the immaterial by the logic of deducing causes from the effects or attributes we know. Yet " the knowledge of the real essences of things belongs to God. Man does not believe in the existence of matter *per se,* but in matter *cum perceptione.* No man ever yet saw matter " (p. 6).

Man first existed as an Idea — a part of God's substance in His image and likeness. Man necessarily became terrestrial, or Human, in order to prepare for the perfection of the celestial state after death. The whole world was created to gratify certain faculties in man. " The Book of Nature " is written in " mysterious characters " which are " the hieroglyphics of the universe " (p. 35). Its gospel is written in the stars; its flowers are " the odorous syllables of His affections "; and animals were originally created " to be the joy-producing hieroglyphics of friendship and love in man's soul " (p. 37).

Primaeval man was created innocent, but in falling from this state, he became savage — an enemy to Nature and an alien from God. We are all the offending offspring of God, the Prodigal Sons of Eternity. In man's fall, Eden turned into a wilderness; the animals acquired their wildness from man's own savagery; and his diseases created the medical plants.

This fall of nature will be righted when man is regenerated. Already he has learned to tame some animals and make even poisonous vegetables healthful and palatable. The great scientists of the past, the Rosicrucians, were masters of the mysterious knowledge of natural forces, which they used in Healing, the only Divine Art. They lived in such harmony with Nature and Man and God that they could restore others.

The pain of this probationary life is the agony of the imperfect instrument which distorts the celestial melody it should produce. This pain prepares us for the full bliss of the next life. Dying is consequently the greatest joy. Christ descended to show us how to live and to die. "Thus he became the Goel and the Bonah" (p. 24). In his pre-existent state he made the Covenant with the Father; as man he suffered on the cross. He suffered for man because man was made in God's image; he did not suffer for Satan. In dying he put off the Human and put on Divinity.

The great truth which he descended to teach was that "Humanity must be rendered Divine before it can be united with the Divinity" (p. 44). By faith in him, we can achieve in this life a resurrection, or regeneration, which restores us to Adam's innocence, and lets man "live the future life while in this world — that is, he

ascends to Heaven before he dies" (p. 32). "As Man is the incarnation of God's reason in the world, it is impossible for him to exercise his natural faculties in harmony with the manifold beauties of the visible creation, without experiencing some of those ineffable thrills of delight which He himself felt in giving birth to them" (p. 36). Christ lived in such perfect harmony with Nature "that a magnetic current, forever streaming from his vital purity, diffused itself with an electric sympathy, through all things, so that the whole world of harmony was, as it were, inter-penetrated with his melodious, joy-inspiring presence" (p. 42). His death, therefore, was such a wrench to the universe that all creation groaned at it.

God is love; his trinity is the Lover, the Beloved, and Love. Who dwells in love dwells in God. By uniting self-love with the universal love, man images his Maker and becomes one with Him. Then he is ready for the kingdom.

In this life, man's soul is Human. He has two lives, the organic and the animal. One is centered in his heart, and presides over composition and decomposition; the other is centered in the brain, and connects man with the external world through the senses. The physical body breaks down; this is death, which releases the soul.

The soul must be immortal. It is a part of God's substance, and God is not subject to death. Like God, the soul is immaterial, invisible, self-conscious, and thinking. Its power to move the body must antecede the body; therefore it is independent of it, and will survive it. Its desire for immortality is another proof of the truth of immortality, for we cannot desire what we have never per-

ceived (pp. 49, 62–63). Moreover, all the ancient philosophers have taught immortality.

The death of the body is the resurrection of man; his soul then ceases to be Human and becomes Angelic. It sheds the flesh, and with it the " person " that is man's " peculiar manner of his being while here in this world " (p. 13); but the freed spirit loses nothing of consciousness or knowledge. It becomes luminous, for is it not the image of the Shekinah? It now consists of a Pneuma (or spirit) and its vehiculum, the Psyche. The organic and animal centers peculiar to the body have disappeared; man now receives knowledge without the mediation of organs, but through the exercise of purified thought.

The result shall be the most perfect joy: the unfeigned love of one another and the sinless worship of God. Man shall be peaceful, painless, emancipated, intuitive, with immediate knowledge of all; the state of heaven is " vibratory . . . blissful music . . . melodious impressions " (p. 23). Music shall be his language.

Such is Chivers's explanation of the universe, stripped of his philological proofs, his physiological theories, and his appeals to the philosophers and saints of all ages and nations. He refers familiarly to Plato and the Neo-Platonists, to the Church Fathers, the Rabbins, the Parsees. His array of names is distinctly impressive, and would have seemed overwhelming at Fruitlands. He does not quote all the names he might, however. His belief that the " person " is the peculiar result of a combined body and

soul may be found in St. Thomas Aquinas.[6] Some of his theory is Baptist; some is Swedenborgian. His use of the word "harmonian" betrays some familiarity with A. J. Davis. Yet he is not lost in all his readings; no sonorous and mystical phrase leads him astray from the well-plotted argument he presents. No doubt a scientist would boggle at his premises, a philosopher find fault with some arguments, and a theologian reject his conclusions. None the less, it is a cool-headed bit of work, of simple words and simple sentences, arranged as a catechism, concerned primarily with the perfect clarity of pure logic, that rises into enthusiasm only when Chivers mentions Heaven.

. . . These glittering Cycles and Epicycles of the glorified spirits of God, not only ray out their joy-imparting lightning to each other, but they are so situated, with respect to the creation, that they inter-penetrate the whole solar system — reaching out to the farthest star in Heaven — with their celestial electricity of love — so that the whole immense fabric of the universe is linked indissolubly by a vital chain of magnetic attraction to the harmonian hierarchy of Heaven. This shows, at once, why the Sons of God shouted aloud for joy on the morning of the creation. When God said, "*Let there be light; and there was light,*" the whole hierarchy of the Cycles and Epicycles of the glorified spirits in Heaven rose up in

[6] *Summa Theologiæ*, I. q. 75, a. 4.

blazing majesty before the throne, and with one sudden gush of blissful rapture, flooded the ever-spreading Fields above with the thunder-deluge of their joyful jubilation. . . .

The influence of Davis wrought diversely on Poe and Chivers. Chivers was concerned with the drama of man, Poe with the physical geometry of the astronomical universe. It is curious that the doctor should revert to mediæval signatures and sympathies and influences, while the poet should quote only the latest astronomers. There is no need of showing how, though they begin and end with God, they differ on every point. Let it be enough that Poe names none of the many authorities appealed to by Chivers, and Chivers none by Poe.

Others tried their hand at the same scheme: Thomas Lake Harris's "Sphere of Communion, A Prose Poem," in the *Shekinah* for 1852, is a typical example.

Davis, meanwhile, had become so famous that on his twenty-first birthday, August 11, 1847, *The Univercœlum, or Spiritual Philosopher* was founded, to issue weekly what truths he might perceive in his states of "clairmativeness." Chivers was overwhelmed with joy. At last the realities of life were being recognized and the inner worlds were being

revealed; at last other seers and prophets were publishing their visions! There is evidence that some of Chivers's neighbors already thought him a little cracked; he had not been politic in speaking too frankly of his own experiences. So he wrote a letter to the editor, S. S. Brittan: " It was a wise saying of Coleridge, the myriad-minded, that we should never declare a truth to the mind of any man who is not prepared to receive it; for, by so doing, we make truth a liar, because he perverts our meaning. Therefore, be cautious how you throw these pearls to swine." But Chivers was not sparing himself; his contributions appeared steadily in the *Univercœlum* from September 16, 1848, when " Fourier in Paradise " appeared, until the paper changed name, purpose, and editor in June, 1849. Altogether, Davis's paper published fourteen of his poems and three pieces of prose, one of which being the account of the vision of Allegra Florence and Eugene Percy as angels before they were born.[7]

Chivers was now flourishing as a magazine poet. His verse appeared regularly in *Graham's, Peter-*

[7] *Univercœlum,* December 9, 1848, Vol. II, p. 22; " Scene from 'Via Coeli; or, the Way to Heaven.' A Moral Drama in Five Acts." Chivers adds a final note: " The Author of this Drama most solemnly avers that what is here related was an actual occurrence — a faithful record of what took place — as is every thing related in the whole Opera. . . . I repeat again, that this Vision was seen by me, *just as recorded,* in the serenest moments of my life."

son's, and the *Univercœlum,* and occasionally in *Arthur's Magazine,* the *Broadway Journal,* the *New Church Repository, Simms' Magazine,* and others. Book reviewers were still haughty; but at any rate, those nasty notes of rejection in " Contributors' Columns " had stopped.[8]

Then suddenly came a horrible shock. On October 7, 1849, his hero, Poe, died. Two days later, the New York *Tribune* published Griswold's anonymous attack on Poe's character — an attack copiously amplified as the prefatory " Memoir " to Poe's collected *Works;* and the battle over the dead man's reputation was on. Chivers hastened to write a *New Life,* but not to support either side. He did not intend to deny Poe's weaknesses, for Chivers was essentially honest; he merely wished to call the public's attention to a fact little recognized — that Poe was a great poet. The public thought of Poe chiefly as an unreliable editor and a violent critic; it also knew that he wrote morbid though clever stories; but his poetry, in spite of the temporary success of " The Raven," was simply not poetry.[9] Its lack of comfortable senti-

[8] As in the *Southern Literary Messenger,* March, 1835, Vol. I, p. 183; the *New York Mirror,* May 16, 1835, Vol. XII, p. 367; *Godey's Lady's Book,* April, 1841, Vol. XXII, p. 190; the veiled attack in *The Magnolia,* November, 1842, Vol. I, p. 328; and a particularly horrid one in *Orion,* March–April, 1843, Vol. II, pp. 370–372.

[9] See Killis Campbell: " Contemporary Opinion of Poe " (*PMLA,* June, 1921, Vol. XXXVI, p. 2).

ments and morals clearly eliminated it from the body of verse then being written. And now his real greatness threatened to be buried under the scandal of his dipsomania! Therefore Chivers intended to reveal Poe as the Poet, whose faults, though tragedies to himself, were of no importance to the world. The manuscript may have been finished, but was never published. The title-page [10] reads:

NEW LIFE

of

EDGAR ALLAN POE

A

Faithful Analysis of His
Genius as a Poet, the
Publication of Many Golden Letters
(one Poem Never Before Published in Any of
His Works), together with some Beautiful
Elegies on his Death

By

T. H. Chivers, M. D.

[10] *Century Magazine*, February, 1903, Vol. LXV, p. 549.

DEDICATION

To the Eternal Spirit of the Immortal Shelley, this work is now most Solemnly dedicated, by one who longs to enjoy his company in Elysium.

THE AUTHOR

For materials, Chivers approached Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Clemm. The latter was only too anxious to help anyone who might defend Poe's memory. " As to Griswold's statement that my poor Eddie ever spoke of you unkindly, [it] is entirely untrue." (This seems to have been contradicted by Poe's last letter to Mrs. Clemm. But she was not making mountains of mole-hills at this moment.) " You were one of the few he *admired* and *loved*. How often has he recited to me some of your beautiful poetry, and said, 'I would have been proud to have been the author of this article.' How often has he repeated, with tears in his dear eyes, that sublime poem of yours, *She came from Heaven to tell me she was blest.*" But in case Poe *had* written something to Griswold which was not entirely respectful towards Chivers, Mrs. Clemm immediately made a loophole: " You know, dear Sir, my darling

Eddie was not entirely perfect, and when he had indulged in a glass or two of wine, he was not responsible for either his words or actions." Let us hope that Chivers did *not* apply that sentence to the one it followed.

What shall we say of the friendship of these two men? "Poe, I think, played with Chivers to make something out of him," wrote Professor Woodberry;[11] "but there was nothing to be made of him but a friend, and that was not Poe's game." Yet to leave it at this is simply to judge Poe by the ordinary standards, and poor Poe certainly was not ordinary. Professor Newcomer found reason to modify this harsh judgment: "The weight of evidence leaves finally no room to doubt that Poe's friendship was as sincere as he was capable of feeling for any man, and that all his published criticisms of Chivers's work represented his real opinion."[12]

New facts about Poe, and better knowledge how to interpret those facts,[13] have increased the weight of

[11] *Century Magazine,* February, 1903, Vol. LXV, p. 558.

[12] *Sewanee Review,* January, 1904, Vol. XII, p. 34.

[13] Most important of all are the *Edgar Allan Poe Letters Till Now Unpublished* (edited by M. N. Stanard, Philadelphia, 1925), as they tell virtually the whole story of the tragedy of Poe's youth, — an incredible tale of brutalizing on the part of Poe's guardian. Joseph Wood Krutch's *Edgar Allan Poe* (New York, 1926) is a brilliant analysis of Poe's inner life, which explains most of his mystery. Hervey Allen's *Israfel* (New York, 1926) contains more facts hitherto unknown.

evidence on the side of tolerance. Poe's reputation has passed its nadir at last, for we of the twentieth century are beginning to discover the secrets of the brain — to get behind the conscious life into the deeper, subconscious motivation which makes and breaks genius. We know now that what made Poe write was what made him drink: alcohol and literature were the two safety valves of a mind that eventually tore itself apart.

His heredity had been none too good; his boyhood training had been uncertain in aim. Then, at some time during his adolescence, he learned of the scandals that flourished behind the scenes of the American Arcadia; the secrets he thus learned earned the hatred of his guardian, who promptly forced him, a gentleman bred, proud, to face the world penniless. Inevitably he fell into Byronisms, and with cynicism and bitterness adopted the pose of the " Satanic " — of the contemptible. Self-contempt and contempt for others grow together. The more he despised mankind, the more mankind retaliated; and the more he was hated, the deeper went his pose, until it ceased to be a pose and became part of him. This antisociability and frank selfishness was the real cause of the hatred he provoked; this — and not his dipsomania — was the reason why even the gentlest

of the Cambridge critics could not tolerate him; this was what drove Griswold into expressing publicly what so many felt privately. To be sure, drink was the reason they gave; they could not see that the drinking was a result, not a cause. Poe, personally, was impossible; and the pathos of his character appears nowhere more clearly than in his self-frustrated friendship with Chivers.

Chivers, on the other hand, was as good a friend as Poe ever had, or could have. For Chivers was no dupe either way: he stands almost alone in possessing that charity (or wisdom) which could distinguish Poe's various aspects and admire or deplore each one as it deserved. He never allowed his admiration for Poe's immortal part — his genius — to be affected in any way whatsoever by the sight of the drunkard lolling in bed of a morning when he should be up and writing, although Chivers himself was a strict Prohibitionist. Consequently, his affectionate toleration came near to changing Poe's attitude towards life. Once or twice Chivers actually broke through the pose, and won sincere admiration or gratitude; but only once or twice. And knowing what he did of Poe, he yet was willing to offer Poe a permanent home in those last days. People have won crowns of glory for less. But this very generosity probably

awoke the old struggle in Poe's breast, and in defense of that pose which he had built against the world, he yielded to the old quirk in his brain; his pride bade him persuade himself that Chivers's generosity was in reality " sneaking."

Chapter IX

Associationism and Eonchs

IN 1848, something had happened which kept Chivers from plunging deeper into the occult drama which was now shaking America. Katie Fox of Hydesville, N. Y., snapped her fingers at certain mysterious raps, and found to the astonishment of the family that she had bridged the gulf between the living and the dead. The news spread like a prairie fire; mediums began functioning in every village; and many ministers openly espoused the new proof of immortality, while others denounced it as pagan magic and witchcraft. Two years later, Davis joined forces with the Spiritualists, for he himself conversed with the dead in his visions. Reality was surpassing even Poe's imagination!

As long as Spiritualism remained subjective, Chivers believed at least some of it. His visions were precisely the same as Judge Edmonds's and Dr. Dexter's; he was profoundly moved to have their reality and importance publicly confirmed. But when

mediums like the gifted Rev. Thomas Lake Harris or the ungifted Mrs. Lydia H. Tenney began publishing verses (ungrammatical) which were ascribed to Edgar A. Poe, Chivers's indignation broke forth.[1] But his protests went unheeded: Poe was among the popular *revenants;* he showed a special partiality for Lizzie Doten, and through her fingers wrote verse much better than her usual work, though really not so good as his own work done on this side of life. Undoubtedly the dead-weight of her brain was too much for the lift of his genius.

Chivers was again outraged when leaping tables and floating tambourines began their testimony. His wrath against the " Rappers " broke forth several times in the columns of the *Georgia Citizen.* Physical phenomena would never testify to immortality as his poetic clairvoyance could.

Meanwhile Chivers had been learning Hebrew and exploring the mysteries of the Kabalah. Those better versed in Hebrew than myself can estimate the extent of his studies by examining the preface to *Memoralia.* Elsewhere he talks of the Sephiroth; and among the letters to Professor George Bush still in existence is one on the symbolism of the Taber-

[1] As in the *Georgia Citizen,* June 26, 1852.

nacle candelabrum. Bush, a Swedenborgian and a scholar, was running a series of articles in the *New Church Repository* on Jewish symbolism; the fourth one (September, 1849) dealt with "The Candlestick."

In this same year, Chivers wrote to W. H. Channing (the new editor of *The Univercœlum,* now renamed *The Spirit of the Age*) that he was an Associationist; that is, one who believed that an ideal community was practical. Such a belief in America dates back at least to 1620; the seventeenth century was obsessed by it; the eighteenth century returned to it as a basis for its Revolutionary theories. Charles Brockden Brown's works are suffused with it; he may have spread the dream in Europe. When the Revolution was safely over, the dream took fire again. "We are all a little wild here with numberless projects of social reform," Emerson wrote Carlyle. "Not a reading man but has a draft of a new Community in his waistcoat pocket. I am gently mad myself, and am resolved to live cleanly." The Brook Farms, Fruitlands, Oneidas, Hopedales, New Edens, and Zions that soon dotted the countryside form a chapter not the least extraordinary in American history.

(Already 1848 was past, with the *Manifest der*

Kommunistichen Partei by Engels and Karl Marx, that Darwin of economics; but America knew nothing of that, as yet, and little of the subsequent revolution.)

America, being then the most liberal and plastic of nations, was particularly well fitted to experiment with any manner of Utopia. Its guiding genius was Charles Fourier, whom Kingsley described in *The Water-Babies* as that "very clever old gentleman but, unfortunately for him and the world, as mad as a March hare." Horace Greeley and Albert Brisbane gave the weight of their names to Fourier's scheme of *phalanges,* or "phalanxes." Fourier believed that every impulse was God-given, and had its place in the world. The only problem was to reorganize society; once that was done, everybody would have to work a little, and nobody much. Of course, each was to work only at his particular hobby. Communities were to be put together like jig-saw puzzles: there were to be just two persons of each type (Fourier had the types all classified and numbered) and consequently would be organized to the highest efficiency. This was known as "passional equilibrium," for it was based on temperament as well as aptitude. When this equilibrium was obtained among men, the animal, vegetable, and mineral worlds would swing into

line: diseases and poisons would vanish, and the lion and the lamb would lie down together.

Of course there were difficulties: who, for example, would feel like cleaning the sewers? Fourier had his answer:

> No passion is more marked in children from ten to twelve years of age than that of filth and dirt. If we do not wish to *change the passions,* we must finds means of making use of this taste, which Nature, it is evident, gives to one half of children. The combined order will, in the corporation of the *Little Hordes,* make a most precious use in social equilibrium of this pretended depravity of taste.
>
> Association will *employ the passions as God created them, without changing their nature.* This is the whole mystery and secret of the calculation of Passional Attraction. The question is not discussed whether the Creator was right or wrong in giving mankind such and such passions: they will be made use of as God gave them. . . .
>
> This enigma cannot be solved in civilization; Association explains it; the taste for dirt is a necessary impulse to enlist children in the corporation of the *Little Hordes,* to induce them to undergo gaily the disgust connected with dirty work, and to open for themselves in filthy functions, a vast career of industrial glory and unitary philanthropy.[2]

[2] Quoted from Fourier quite seriously by Albert Brisbane in his *Social Destiny of Man* (Philadelphia, 1840), pp. 444-446. See also *The Harbinger* (1845–49) *passim.*

Chivers had been, and was again to be, a father; so we must not suppose that he endorsed this particular detail of the ideal community, even though the child be " always well cleaned and perfumed before and after a short period of labor." Indeed, no American Associationist accepted Fourier's scheme *in toto* (there were also some strange sexual regulations, I believe); but the general idea was so ingenious — so simple!

Of course, Chivers had entered the Swedenborgian Church, for Fourier and Swedenborg went hand in hand, one organizing the Here and the other the Hereafter. Intellectually and spiritually starved in America, Chivers, like so many of his countrymen, was searching all the highways and byways of thought for some satisfaction.

Poetry, however, remained his chief interest, and in the latter part of 1850 he issued his most famous volume, *Eonchs of Ruby, A Gift of Love* (dated 1851). It was his first volume to be regularly published. Spalding and Shepard of New York placed their name on the title-page; but they probably did so for a consideration, as Chivers owned the copyright.

It was the period of gift-books — of thousands of *Friendship's Offerings, Amaranths, Caskets,* and

Chaplets of Pearl. Chivers bowed to the fashion in his subtitle, and even went so far as to provide a lovely pictorial cover bearing the image of a swan.

But what is an " Eonch " ?

There were inquiries in his own day; finally Chivers provided an explanation in the *Georgia Citizen* (June 28, 1851):

> The word *Eonch* is the same as *Concha Marina — Shell of the Sea. Eonch* is used instead of *Concha,* merely for its euphony. It is the same as the *Kaur Gaur* of the Hebrews. Ruby signifies, in the language of Correspondence, *Divine Love.* The word *Eonch* is used, as a title, by metonymy, for *Songs.* The meaning of the title is, therefore, apparent — namely, *Songs of Divine Love.* The clouds, I hope, are now dispelled; and the mystery, I presume, evaporates. I hope the day will continue clear.

" But what business has anybody with the radical meaning of any Poet's title to his book? " Chivers also inquired. His explanation was lost in the files of a Southern newspaper; and the question remained a matter of merry mystery until Professor Harrison read the poems and explained the marvel.

Yet, to quote the disgusted Chivers once more, "how can any man who wears spectacles see into the *inner life* of things? " The unconscious mind has its own way of constructing words: it telescopes sev-

eral old ones into a wholly new one composed wholly of overtones. Professor Lowes, in his fascinating detective story of a scholar, *The Road to Xanadu,* shows that Coleridge's "Abora" was a combination of Amara, Abola, and Astaboras.[3] Lewis Carroll got his inspirations in moments of abstraction or on the borderland of sleep;[4] his portmanteau words are famous. There are even those who have attempted to recover what seems to be a complete inner language — John Dee in the sixteenth century and A.E. in the twentieth. Professor Flournoy's brilliant analysis of a medium's "Martian" language is of extreme interest.

In Chivers's own time, many people were experimenting. Swedenborgen, again, seems to have been the starting point: his *Heaven and Hell* contains a section on the speech of angels (pp. 234–245); but he recorded no words, only vowel-sounds. The indefatigable Davis was at it: he reported quite a num-

[3] Boston and New York, 1927, p. 376; see also the note on p. 396. I may take this opportunity to supplement Professor Lowes's discoveries with a theory of my own: the theory that "Kubla Khan" is primarily a record of Coleridge's own physical sensations, as he sank beneath the power of the "anodyne." These sensations furnished the substance of the poem; his reading, which Professor Lowes has traced, furnished the fantastic form into which the sensations formed themselves. Thus Coleridge became aware of the powerful pulsations of his heart; his imagination, fed by books, transformed these heart-beats into the pulsating fountain of the River Alph.

[4] *Atlantic Monthly,* June, 1929, pp. 788–789; Ethel M. Arnold: "Reminiscences of Lewis Carroll."

ber of words from "Summer Land."[5] The Rev. Sylvester Judd, whose *Margaret* (1845) won fine praise from Lowell, invented any number of words. Here is a description of boys coasting:

> They skewed, brustled and bumped along, the crates wabbled and warped from side to side, the riders screamed, cross-bit, frumped and hooted at each other; they lost control of their course, their bows struck, they parted with a violent rebound; one went giddying round and round, fraying and spluttering the snow, and dashed against a tree; the other whirled into the same line plunged with its load headlong into the first. It was a regular mish-mash; some of the boys were doused into each other, some were jolled against the tree, some sent grabbling on their faces down the hill, some plumped smack on the ice, some whisked round and round, and left standing.[6]

On Judd's death-bed, he found the other world too much for his tongue.

> In sleep, the natural fertility of his imagination displayed itself in revels amid the most charming scenes of physical and spiritual beauty. Those "visions," as he called them, left a deep impression on his waking hours, which he sometimes strove to describe. . . . I . . . asked what was the form of his visions; if he saw persons. "No;

[5] Especially in his *Death and the After Life* (4th enlarged ed., New York, 1876): "Voice of James Victor Wilson."

[6] *Margaret*, p. 174. None of these words is a misprint; Judd repeated them all when he rewrote *Margaret* in 1851 (Vol. I, p. 234).

not persons, but states of being. They seem to be *sub-local.* I have been on the tops of the mountains before; but now I have been *under* the mountains. Oh! I would be willing to be sick a month for one such night as I have had." He seemed to labor in vain to set before the mind of another the pictures impressed upon his own; and, not only in this, but in other connections, it was not a little amusing, while at the same time sad, to see him in his weakness, and in the paucity of language at his control, attempt, by words new-coined and newly combined, to body forth his thought.[7]

William James's friend, Benjamin P. Blood, in his *Pluriverse,* attempted to discover the ultimate expressiveness of pure sound. At the same time, Stephen Pearl Andrews was inventing " Alwato," a universal language based on the meaning of abstract syllables. Andrews was an Abolitionist, the projector of an ideal community called " the Pantarchy," the popularizer of shorthand in America, a fighter for spelling reform, and the master of thirty-two languages. He also tried to solve the problem of the universe; in his organization of " Universology " he drew parallels between geometry and music; and from musical theory he developed his ideal universal language.[8]

[7] [Arethusa Hall]: *Life and Character of the Rev. Sylvester Judd,* Boston, 1857, pp. 514–515.

[8] His writings are many; perhaps his *Primary Synopsis of Universology and Alwato* (New York, 1871) is the handiest.

Thus the catastrophe of Babel was to be repaired. Unfortunately Dee and Swedenborg are at variance on the tongue of angels; Summerland and Mars could not possibly understand each other; and A. E.'s gods speak yet another language.

Today, James Joyce is inventing new words after the fashion of Judd and Carroll; and his followers, in *transition,* are planning to revivify literature by improvising new vocabularies.[9]

Chivers, in his very first book, had attempted to enlarge the poetic vocabulary by the invention of new words — an attempt continued in his second book. In *Nacoochee* and *The Lost Pleiad,* however, he disciplined himself sternly, and was as correct as he could be. The prose *Search After Truth* necessarily contained technicalities from scholastic philosophy, and he allowed himself other liberties as well. But in *Eonchs of Ruby,* his original impulse broke loose again, and he flaunted his revolt from the dictionary on the very cover of his book.

The immediate cause for this outbreak was the example of Poe, who had invented words like "Nicean," "scoriac," "red-litten," and "Aidenn," and had used them frugally but effectively. After Tennyson's volume of 1842, melodious feminine

[9] *transition,* June, 1929, nos. 16–17, *passim.*

names had become common; Poe made much of the sonorous Lenore (from Burger's ballad), the exquisite Eulalie, and the shadowy Ulalume. Poe's frank inventions gave Chivers the courage to do likewise: he not only took over some of Poe's more convenient rhyme-words, but evolved some gems of his own: acromatic, Aeonian, empyreal, eonch, mellifluent, sylvanry. In an outburst of sorrow, he calls a dead son a " Micro-Uranus " (a little heaven) and a " Philomelian Eclecticist of Song."

Chivers's experiment, however, has more significance than a mere transcending of Webster, for it marks his belief that the melody of verse outweighs both the literal meaning and the moral.

In *Eonchs of Ruby* Chivers at last was finding his true bent. Splendid passages of poetry jostle pages that should never have been written, and much less printed. Clever technical devices alternate with clichéd quatrains. The most startling originalities are overshadowed by phrases made famous in the works of others. And nothing is so bad but it may contain stanzas as exquisite as the following:

> Like the wild Swan on the ocean,
> Circled with her Cygnets white,
> Star-engirdled, with soft motion,
> Sails the Moon through Heaven tonight. . . .

Soft words from off the eaves
Of her sweet lips now fall
Like dew-drops from the leaves
Of roses — rhythmical. . . .[10]

On the other hand, there are few poems with that Tennysonian perfection of detail which Poe had defended so strongly.

But, as Poe himself demonstrated, very few good poems indeed are necessary to establish a reputation. And no one yet has been kind enough to pick from this astonishing jumble of Chivers's those poems wholly original and wholly beautiful.

Eonchs of Ruby opens with three big elegies. The first, " The Vigil in Aiden," is a tribute to Poe.

In the Rosy Bowers of AIDEN,
With her ruby-lips love-laden,
Dwelt the mild, the modest Maiden
Whom POLITIAN called LENORE.

Politian is Poe, Lenore is Virginia Clemm. She dies, and in dying promises that they shall be reunited in Aiden " forever more."

Then beside the silent river
Where he wandered still forever
By her lonely grave that ever

[10] From " Good Night," p. 152, and " Eulalie," p. 163.

Seemed to Heaven the only door —
Through the amethystine morning
Came foul Lucifer —

to turn the refrain of " forever more " to the famous " never more." A swan-like maiden (Helen Whitman, of course) intervenes; " like pure living Pearl " she floats past in an attempt to save Politian from the Demon, who is trying to seduce him from the memory of the lost Lenore. And that maiden herself bends from heaven, with song like —

Lofty piles of echoing thunder,
Drowning all the stars with wonder;

but when her voice again is no longer heard, Politian again despairs, while Lucifer imitates her voice, again pessimistically perverting the refrain. The struggle continues: Lenore next appears to Politian's gaze as a lily of fiery perfume; and, like the Blessed Damosel, assures him:

I have prayed for thy dear spirit. . . .
I have prayed for thee in Heaven —
All thy sins are now forgiven —
Thou art pardoned — thou art shriven —
O! forget not thy Lenore!

Lucifer's last scheme is to bring Politian a draught of " heavenly Lethe " (alcohol, one presumes), with

the promise of an immediate Aiden; but it opens only the cleft of Hades. Yet Politian conquers eventually; Lenore descends and releases him from his "clayey prison"; and together they rise into Eternity.

The second elegy, "The Mighty Dead," is the long poem which Poe praised in 1842, but could not get published in *Graham's Magazine* on account of its length — eighty-five six-line stanzas. It is Chivers's best-sustained poem. He eulogizes those whom he considers the great poets and patriots: Harrison (who had died April 4, 1841), Washington, Edward Young, Milton, Byron, Marco Botzaris, Shelley, Felicia Hemans, Shakspere, and Andrew Jackson. The medley makes us smile, but it transports us back to 1842, when such a list was wholly sensible. Young has since lost his world-wide reputation as a poet; Marco Botzaris is remembered only as the title of Halleck's declamatory poem; Mrs. Hemans, I fear, is not even remembered — except in second-hand bookshops; and the two presidents whose names begin and end the list do not stand out quite so prominently as they used to do, in those years when the line of presidents was still brief.

"The Mighty Dead," for all that, is an excellent specimen of oratorical poetry, — a type suspect to-

day, though once deservedly popular. However turgid and cynical our politics were then, above them all soared Milton's old belief: that liberty was the final revelation of Christianity. The American flag was the blazing symbol of that ideal; where it stood, God at last had revealed the ultimate purpose of creation, planned from the foundation of the world.

> This Monumental Fane,
> As did the uncreated world in God's —
> Lived archetypal in the souls of men;
> Till, springing upward from the dim abodes
> Of THOUGHT, it stood, like NATURE on the Night
> Of Chaos, wonderful — star-spangled — bright!

We are too old — we have forgotten too much — to dare write oratory today.

The third elegy, "Avalon," is the most Chiversian poem in the whole book. It is the most original, the most poignant, and the most melodious of them all, in spite of several stanzas better forgotten.[11] Chivers is lamenting the death of his children:

> Four little Angels killed by one cold Death
> To make God glad!

Allegra Florence had been followed, within a year, by Chivers's three remaining children. "Avalon"

[11] Conrad Aiken includes this poem in his *American Poetry* 1670–1928 (Modern Library); he felt constrained, however, to omit certain stanzas.

is the oldest boy, Eugene Percy — not baby Tommy; his poetic name rose from a subconscious blending of the valley of Ajalon, the island of King Arthur, and David's lament over Absalom. The cadence of Chivers's refrain is unusually happy. A couple of stanzas should show to what heights he was capable of rising:

For thou didst tread with fire-ensandaled feet,
    Star-crowned, forgiven,
The burning diapason of the stars so sweet,
    To God in Heaven!
And walking on the sapphire-paven street,
Didst take upon the highest Sill thy seat —
Waiting in glory there my soul to meet,
    When I am lying
    Beside the beautiful undying
  In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
  Oh, Avalon! my son! my son! . . .

The Violet of her soul-suffused eyes
    Was like that flower
Which blows its purple trumpet at the skies
    For Dawn's first hour —
The Morning-glory at the first sunrise,
Nipt by Death's frost with all her glorious dyes!
For Florence rests where my dear Lily lies —
    Where thou art lying
    Beside the beautiful undying
  In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
  Oh, Avalon! my son! my son! . . .

The fourth poem in the book, "The Lusiad," is wholly hopeless. The title is the title of Camoens' epic, which had been perverted to "The Lousiad" by the exquisite Peter Pindar. Chivers named his poem as he did simply because the heroine's name was Lucy! She dwelt on the junction of the Tallapoosa and the Coosa (i.e., in Montgomery county, Alabama). One dusk of May, she found in the cool stream a sweet Eonch of coral, which she brought to the poet; he taught her to blow it loudly. In the mild October they wandered through the fields of Cooly Rauber, [12] while she sang. At last she was struck by lightning, which burned her robe to ashes; angels carried her quickly away; and she lies beneath the weeping willows where the Tallapoosa joins the Coosa.

"The Lusiad" is an experiment that failed badly. It stirs no depths of the imagination as it is mere jingle. Rhyme led the poet into absurdities that no music could atone for.

> Like the black wings of the Raven
> In the sun's glow,
> On her neck, from morn to even,
> Whiter than snow,

[12] "The Cooly Rauber is a hybrid between the Cabbage and Turnip—hence it is called the Cabbage Turnip" (*Search After Truth*, p. 35). Today it is better known as kohl-rabi.

Like fresh lilies born in Heaven —
  Flowed her locks low —
(For they never had been shaven —)
  Long time ago,
  Ah! who now can know
How I loved the Maid, sweet Lucy!
  Long, long time ago!

Against the parenthesized line Augustine Duganne protested,[13] but in vain. Chivers wrote back (December 17, 1850): " The line to which you object and italicize in *The Lusiad* is the *best* in the verse. The Circassians never ' shave ' their hair. The word *' shaven '* is the most *poetical* that could have been used." Thus did stubbornness defend the preposterous! Had not Poe's Raven been shaven?

" Isabel " is a happier experiment in stanzas with refrains; it celebrates another maid whose tragic death may yet kill the poet. She dies to better music, however:

Like an Angel sweetly smiling
  On the earth, dear Isabel!
All the night of care beguiling —
  Fare-thee-well!
Silver twilight softly snowing
  On the earth and on the sea,
All the darkness overflowing —
  Rode the Moon — farewell to thee!

[13] Review of *Eonchs of Ruby* in *The Message Bird* (New York), December 16, 1850, pp. 561–562.

And so the book continues, alternately charming and appalling. Some of the poems were good magazine verse of the period, reprinted from *Graham's* or *Peterson's* or the *Univercœlum;* others could never be printed anywhere except by the author; and some remains good poetry today. "The Shell" has a stanza worth re-reading:

> Here, in its labyrinthine curve, it leaves
> The foot-prints of its song in many dyes;
> And here, incessantly, it ever weaves
> The rainbow-tissue of its melodies.

"The Dying Swan" is an unexpected cataract of jubilation over the release of death, the song rising to thunder-tones "in Hallelujah-shouts for Liberty's sweet sake." "Evening" is one of several poems rhymed *aaaa:*

> Out of the crystal Gates of Heaven,
> Now comes the pensive blue-eyed Even,
> Weeping like Eve, when first forgiven
> In penitence, from Eden driven.
>
> Down in the acromatic streams,
> Meeting the luminiferous beams
> With which the air forever teems,
> The golden mail of minnows gleams. . . .

"The Chaplet of Cypress" opens splendidly:

> Up through the hyaline ether-sea,
> Star-diademed, in chariot of pure pain,

Through th' empyreal star-fires radiantly,
Triumphant over Death in Heaven to reign
Thy soul is gone, seeking its Blest Abode,
Where break the songs of stars against the feet of God.

But there is no end to the quoting of fragments. One poem at least should be given complete.

LILY ADAIR

The Apollo Belvedere was adorning
The chamber where Eulalie lay,
While Aurora, the Rose of the Morning,
Smiled full in the face of the Day.
All around stood the beautiful Graces
Bathing Venus — some combing her hair —
While she lay in her husband's embraces *
A-moulding my Lily Adair —
My Fawn-like Lily Adair —
My Dove-like Lily Adair —
My beautiful, dutiful Lily Adair.[14]

Where the Oreads played in the Highlands,
And the Water-Nymphs bathed in the streams,
In the tall Jasper Reeds of the Islands —
She wandered in life's early dreams.
For the Wood-Nymphs then brought from the Wildwood
The turtle Doves Venus kept there,

* It was a beautiful Idea of the Greeks that the procreation of beautiful children might be promoted by keeping in their sleeping apartments an Apollo or Hyacinthus. In this way they not only patronized Art, but begat a likeness of their own love. [T.H.C.]

[14] By a misprint, each of these last three lines begins with "Of."

Which the Dryades tamed, in his childhood,
For Cupid, to Lily Adair —
To my Dove-like Lily Adair —
To my lamb-like Lily Adair —
To my beautiful, dutiful Lily Adair.

Where the Opaline Swan circled, singing,
With her eider-down Cygnets at noon,
In the tall Jasper Reeds that were springing
From the marge of the crystal Lagoon —
Rich Canticles, clarion-like, golden,
Such as only true love can declare,
Like an Archangel's voice in times olden —
I went with my Lily Adair —
With my lamb-like Lily Adair —
With my saint-like Lily Adair —
With my beautiful, dutiful Lily Adair.

Her eyes, lily-lidded, were azure,
Cerulean, celestial, divine —
Suffused with the soul-light of pleasure,
Which drew all the soul out of mine.
She had all the rich grace of the Graces,
And all that they had not to spare;
For it took all their beautiful faces
To make one for Lily Adair —
For my Christ-like Lily Adair —
For my Heaven-born Lily Adair —
For my beautiful, dutiful Lily Adair.

She was fairer by far than that Maiden,
The star-bright Cassiope,
Who was taken by Angels to Aiden

And crowned with eternity.
For her beauty the Sea-Nymphs offended,
Because so surpassingly fair;
And so death then the precious life ended
Of my beautiful Lily Adair —
Of my Heaven-born Lily Adair —
Of my star-crowned Lily Adair —
Of my beautiful, dutiful Lily Adair.

From her Paradise-Isles in the ocean,
To the beautiful City of On,
By the mellifluent rivers of Goshen,
My beautiful Lily is gone!
In her Chariot of Fire translated,
Like Elijah, she passed through the air,
To the City of God golden-gated —
The Home of my Lily Adair —
Of my star-crowned Lily Adair —
Of my God-loved Lily Adair —
Of my beautiful, dutiful Lily Adair.

On the vista-path made by the Angels,
In her Chariot of Fire, she rode,
While the Cherubim sang their Evangels —
To the Gates of the City of God.
For the Cherubim-band that went with her,
I saw them pass out of the air —
I saw them go up through the ether
Into Heaven with my Lily Adair —
With my Christ-like Lily Adair —
With my God-loved Lily Adair —
With my beautiful, dutiful Lily Adair.

Chapter X

The Problem of Plagiarism

EONCHS OF RUBY brought Chivers more notoriety than fame because of what seemed to be the obvious borrowings from Poe. Who dared to write this poem on Politian, Lenore, and Aiden in the "Raven" meter? And these references to Israfel? And here yet another poem in the "Raven" meter: "Lord Uther's Lament for Ella," where we read:

> In the mild month of October,
> Through the fields of Cooly Rauber
> By the great Archangel Auber. . . .

Was not this filched outright from "Ulalume"? And here yet another, "Isadore," which helps itself freely to matter as well as meter of the "Raven"! And another entitled "Eulalie"! But most noticeable of all was a cult of verbal music, such as the great Poe only, in all the world, had ever developed! It took no subtle searching to discover the sources of this unknown poet's inspiration.

Chivers first defended himself in private letters to those who advised him to give up his Poe-worship. Then, when this seemed to be of no effect, he published his case under the name of *Fiat Justitia* in *The Waverley Magazine* (1853). Defenders of Poe answered at once. The controversy grew so hot and misdirected on both sides that finally on October 29, 1853, the editor closed his columns to further discussion, even adding that he desired no more articles from *Fiat Justitia* " on that subject or any other." [1] So Chivers switched the controversy to the *Georgia Citizen,* where nothing happened at all. He had failed miserably, both in cleverness of invective and in effective logic: one great conviction seemed to have blinded him to the details of argument. His customary method of defense was counter-attack. " But all these things are mine," he wrote W. Gilmore Simms (April 10, 1852); " I am the Southern man who taught Mr. Poe all these things. All these things were published long before ' The Raven,' from which ' The Raven ' was taken." To Augustine Duganne, on December 17, 1850, he wrote: " Poe stole every

[1] An outline of the dreary controversy is given in Joel Benton's *Poe-Chivers Controversy* (*In the Poe Circle,* New York, 1899). His suggestion that Chivers's defender " Felix Forresti " was possibly Chivers again is, indeed, a possibility; but the tone of the letter suggests to me rather a personal friend who drew his materials direct from the poet.

thing that is worth any thing from me. This I thought you *knew* perfectly well. . . . Poe stole all his 'Raven' from me; but was the greatest Poetical Critic that ever existed." (This last is the unkindest thing one poet can ever say of another.) To Griswold, March 28, 1851, he wrote angrily for the letters in which Poe was alleged to have spoken harshly of Chivers. "He no doubt felt piqued when I accused him of having stolen his 'Raven' from my *Poem* 'To Allegra Florence in Heaven' — which you *know* he did — if you know anything at all about it. The same is true of his Lectures on Poetry — besides many other things."

This is strong language; Chivers had lost his head. He was being attacked at the most sensitive spot — his poetic pride; and he spoiled his defense by answering too quickly. Had he thought a moment, he could have said to Simms: "But, my dear sir, 'The Vigil in Aiden' is a lament over Poe; an explanation of, and an answer to, the pessimism of 'The Raven' — not an attempt to steal from him"; and Simms could have made no reply but retraction. Chivers, however, was not content with this. Believing that the "Raven" meter was originally his own, he pressed that point instead — and besides, was not

" Lenore " a name common in many romantic poems?

But the dead Poe, the great poet, got the credit, while Chivers (now aging into Orphic megalomania) seemed likely to remain a magazine poet. Stung by neglect, urged on by his friends, he shouted out his claims. His complete lack of humor betrayed him into his enemies' hands; for as an example of the prototype of " The Raven " he quoted what may well be the vilest, the most excruciating stanza he ever penned:

> As an egg, when broken, never
> Can be mended, but must ever
> Be the same crushed egg forever —
> So shall this dark heart of mine!
> Which, though broken, is still breaking,
> And shall never more cease aching
> For the sleep which has no waking —
> For the sleep which now is thine!

Of course we cannot blame a father prostrated with grief over his dead first-born for lacking a sense of humor. But it was the end of Chivers's literary reputation. This Humpty-Dumpty conceit has bid fair to outlive all his other works. Critics had but to quote his own defense, and his case was laughed out of court. And to this day Chivers has mainly been re-

membered as a monstrous parasite upon the fair fame of Poe.

But before the question can be decided, we must understand thoroughly the attitude of Chivers's generation towards plagiarism. In those days, as we have said, the general belief of the American literati was that Parnassus was a well-populated community, in which everything was owned in common. Citizenship was easily procured, simply by speaking its standardized language and thinking its standardized thoughts. It never occurred to them that the greatest poems often had started, not followed, literary fashions. To speak one's inmost personal belief in its own peculiar language, let understand who could, was to them a heresy dangerously overflavored with Enthusiasm!

As a result, any one of a dozen prominent poets might have signed almost any of another's compositions. Nay, worse! — the question when and where to use the inverted commas denoting borrowed phrases was often a problem too subtle to be solved. Helen Whitman's *Hours of Life,* for an example, has hardly a poem without those fatal punctuation marks.

Poe was too fastidious to do any such thing openly. Deeply original, he reacted against the attitude of the times with cries almost unbalanced of " Plagiarism!

Plagiarism! " — for he had a personality not to be poached upon. The critical sense and the common honesty of the Harvard poets were also doing a great deal towards giving American poets a standard less lax.

Like his contemporaries, Chivers borrowed at times, though rather less than they, but with equal frankness. His " To a China Tree " (in *Nacoochee*) bears the warning: " Suggested by reading the ' Old Oaken Bucket ' by Woodworth." This warning was hardly necessary: his borrowing was quite evident; so in the reprint (" Memorial of my Childhood " in *Virginalia*), he omitted the note. There was nothing dishonest about this; in those days anyone calling him a plagiarist would have been promptly dubbed a fool. Charles Fenno Hoffman wrote a " Morning Hymn " which appeared in the *New York Mirror* for June 17, 1837. Every now and then Chivers felt inspired by the verse in this magazine to write some of his own. Hoffman's hymn was one of these inspirations. It runs as follows:

MORNING HYMN

" Let there be light! " The Eternal spoke,
And from the abyss where darkness rode
The earliest dawn of nature broke,
And light around creation flow'd.

The glad earth smiled to see the day,
  The first-born day, come blushing in;
The young day smiled to shed its ray
  Upon a world untouch'd by sin.

"Let there be light!" O'er heaven and earth,
  The God who first the day-beam pour'd,
Utter'd again his fiat forth,
  And shed the Gospel's light abroad.
And, like the dawn, its cheering rays
  On rich and poor were meant to fall,
Inspiring their Redeemer's praise
  In lowly cot and lordly hall.

Then come, when in the Orient first
  Flushes the signal light for prayer;
Come with the earliest beams that burst
  From God's bright throne of glory there.
Come kneel to Him who through the night
  Hath watch'd above thy sleeping soul,
To Him, whose mercies, like his light,
  Are shed abroad from pole to pole.

Hoffman has forgotten his *Genesis* when he imagines that the first light broke forth over a completed world; he has lost his ear when he rhymes *pour'd* and *abroad*. His moral is flat and smug; I don't believe that he even expected anybody to believe that he followed his own recommendation and got up at earliest dawn for a morning prayer. Chivers saw at once what Hoffman had missed: the first fiat of the

Almighty did not produce a dawn-maid with an eighteenth-century blush; it was instead the primal manifestation of God, the conflict of supernal light with enormous chaos. So in August, 1837, he wrote:

MORNING HYMN

"LET THERE BE LIGHT!" And lo! there stole
From out the womb of Darkness, light!
A flood of glory circled round the soul,
And rent the curtains of primeval night!
Through all the vast immensities of space
A glorious light streamed up Eternity!
And, bursting through all chaos, sought its place
In the bright islands of the earth and sea.

"LET THERE BE LIGHT!" And from the abyss
Of Darkness gushed the Eternal's smile!
And, flying through all Nature, came to this,
And gave the firmament another isle!
For Time was as Eternity is now,
Till that immortal light was given,
Whose smile of gladness from Jehovah's brow
Lit up the confines of the realms of heaven!

"LET THERE BE LIGHT!" And from the slime
Of that immortal sea whose wave is love,
The Maker gave existence unto Time,
By smiling on his workmanship above.
And, rising from that great Supernal Power,
The same sweet smile ascends the sky,
As from the birth of that auspicious hour,
Ten thousand worlds were sentinelled on high.

This is not a good poem, but it is a better poem than Hoffman's; and it is not genuine plagiarism, as the fundamental ideas are so different. Yet this method of writing has its faults; one easily slips into the use of things which really belong to some one else. Dame Memory and her siren daughters replace the Daughters of Beulah. " Thou wert not born to die," misquoted Chivers (not concerning a nightingale, but Felicia Hemans) and the ghost of the robbed Keats will always haunt the spot. The question is not one of ethics, but of æsthetics.

Such was the habit of the times. And when two poets, with some striking similarities of temperament, who have developed something of the same theory of poetry, meet in a world which takes literary borrowings for granted, they cannot help influencing each other.

It is not surprising that Poe and Chivers should both have fallen under the spell of Byron in their youth; and that they should both have been impressed by the Lost Pleiad is not surprising either, when we consider the number of poems for which Byron's line may have been the original impulse. Poe's reference appears in " Israfel," first published in his rare volume of 1831; Chivers's first reference is in his still rarer volume of 1832. But it is curious

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that both poets should be struck independently by the same note on Israfel in Moore's *Lalla Rookh;* yet such seems indubitably to be the case. Poe's priority here is unmistakable; but as Chivers quoted, from 1839 to 1853, Moore's note from Sale, and not Poe's improved quotation from the Koran, Chivers's independence seems proved.

The first chance for borrowing seems to have been in 1834. Chivers published his drama, *Conrad and Eudora,* based on the " Kentucky Tragedy," and probably sent a copy to Poe's periodical for review. There is a good chance that Poe saw the volume, and determined to make a good job out of what Chivers had botched; the result was *Politian.* Possibly this may have been another coincidence in the development of the two poets; but even if it were not, we cannot accuse Poe of any undue borrowing. Chivers was good at drama but bad at blank verse; Poe was good at the verse but failed at the drama. *Conrad and Eudora* of 1834 and *Politian* of 1835 are too unlike to trace any plagiarism.

When, however, each poet published a volume in 1845, the fun begins. The two men had been in correspondence since 1840; in 1842, Chivers began sending his verse to Poe for criticism; they exchanged ideas, discussed theories and contemporary

poets, but did not meet until 1845. Chivers was working on the problems of verbal melody of new meters and of the developed refrain. The richness of open vowels, of luxuriant alliteration; the possibilities of returns and varied repetitions; the elaborately-builded stanza-forms — these were things that he understood and cultivated with great care. " Anybody of moderate ideality can write a Poem by another['s] rhythm; but it is a task which few have ever attempted, to originate a style," he wrote later.[2] " The very rhythms of my Poems cost me years of study." Poe was also doing the same thing.

Among the poems which Chivers sent Poe before 1845 were several dealing with the return of a dead love to the despondent poet, especially " The Heavenly Vision " which Poe particularly admired.[3] Another one, " To Allegra Florence in Heaven," was in the " Raven " meter (but minus the refrain); it had been written on December 12, 1842 — nearly three years before the " Raven." [4] Another poem, a " Lament on the Death of my Mother " (written on July 1, 1839; published July 24, 1839, in the *Sentinel*

[2] *Century Magazine,* Februuary, 1903, Vol. LXV, p. 556. The many changes in his printed versions of his poems bear out his claim.

[3] Poe to Chivers, June 6, 1842; Poe to Chivers, July 10, 1844; Mrs. Clemm to Chivers, December 8, 1852.

[4] The editor of *Orion* (March-April, 1843) rejected it hilariously, and with plenty of quotations.

and Witness; republished August 1, 1839, in the *United States Gazette*), had for refrain the words "No! never more!" to the beauty of which Chivers called attention in a footnote (in both newspaper versions). Combine these, with a spark of genius to fuse them properly, and you have something very like "The Raven."

In his claims for priority, Chivers particularly stressed "To Allegra Florence in Heaven." Both poems are elegies; both are in trochaic octameter; both are rhymed *aaabcccb*. In both, the trochees tend to combine into pæons; both sometimes use internal overflow:

Like some snow-white cloud just under Heaven, some breeze has torn asunder (Chivers)

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain (Poe)

Poe apparently took Chivers's stanza, with its metrical tricks; printed two lines as one;[5] and added two lines as a refrain, the first repeating in a changed form the preceding line, and the second, shortened, ending in "Never more."

[5] But not originally. See Poe to Griswold, April 19, 1845 (Harrison's *Life and Letters of Poe,* Vol. II, p. 202); and *Broadway Journal* May 24, 1845 (*Complete Poems of Poe,* edited by Whitty, p. 225).

But even this change was borrowed from Chivers. Indeed, the crowning appropriation for "The Raven" came, not from "To Allegra Florence in Heaven" at all, but from "Isadore," which had been published as early as 1841.[6] This poem describes the poet's grief over the dead beloved. In a nocturnal vigil, a Voice tells him that she is divided from him forever. A quotation of the opening stanzas should be sufficient to establish Poe's source beyond question.

While the world lay round me sleeping,
I alone for ISADORE
Patient Vigils lonely keeping,
Some one said to me while weeping:
"Why this grief forever more?"
And I answered: "I am weeping
For my blessed ISADORE."

Then the VOICE again said: "Never
Shall thy soul see ISADORE!
God from thee thy love did sever —
He has damned thy soul forever!
Wherefore then her loss deplore?
Thou shalt live in Hell forever!
Heaven now holds thine ISADORE!

[6] W. C. Richardson in *The Boston Evening Transcript,* April 24, 1897. When Chivers wrote Poe on February 21, 1847, inviting him to live with him in Georgia for the rest of his life, Chivers ended his letter by quoting three lines from this poem, without naming author or title, as something with which Poe would be perfectly familiar. See Harrison, Vol. II, p. 280.

" She is dead — the world benighted —
  Dark for want of ISADORE!
Have not all your hopes been blighted?
How can you be reunited?
  Can mere words the dead restore?
Have not all your hopes been blighted?
  Why then hope for ISADORE? "

" Back to Hell, thou ghostly Horror! "
  Thus I cried, dear ISADORE!
" Phantom of remorseless Sorrow!
Death might from thee pallor borrow —
  Borrow leanness ever more!
Back to Hell again! — tomorrow
  I will go to ISADORE! " . . .

Here we have the fundamental idea of " The Raven," and something of its atmosphere as well. Moreover, we have the repeated line with the repeated rhyme; and the shortened line always ending on " Isadore." Is Poe's " Lenore " so different? [7] And this *ore* rhyme here (as in " The Raven ") is carried throughout the poem.

Chivers's priority in these things — idea, meter, refrain, and something of the atmosphere — is unquestionable. There can be little doubt that they (along with Barnaby Rudge's raven, Burger's

[7] " Isadore " uses the name " Politian," which Chivers had surely borrowed from Poe. Thus is the question of plagiarism complicated!

" Lenore," Miss Barrett's " Lady Geraldine's Courtship," and perhaps several other items) were in Poe's mind when he wrote " The Raven," which first appeared in January, 1845. When Poe reviewed *The Lost Pleiad* in the following August, he not only mentioned, but *stressed,* Chivers's originality, although Poe became a crank on the least suspicion of plagiarism.

Had Chivers's poems been written after Poe's, we would call Chivers the plagiarist without hesitation. But as they were written and published before " The Raven," the only question is this: did Chivers merely furnish Poe with " sources," or did Poe actually plagiarize?

The question, as I have said before, is one of æsthetics, not ethics. If complete originality is essential to literary honesty, then Chaucer, Shakspere, and Milton were confirmed plagiarists through and through. And Professor Lowes will have been at great pains to prove Coleridge in their company. But Professor Lowes has done more than show that what comes out must have gone in; he has also shown that in the hidden depths of the mind, some mysterious synthesizing takes place, which combines all the elements into something wholly new. And that is just what happened in Poe's mind. He

read Chivers's poems and saw their undeveloped possibilities. Something in his own mind fused and transmuted them into a great poem. He had used, and not copied, Chivers's attempts; " The Raven " remains wholly Poe's, whatever its original materials may have been.

The materials of literature are few and free to all: what makes it literature is the peculiar and original form given it. Real plagiarism is the theft of another writer's individuality: it is the use of material already so well stamped by the soul of another that the robber cannot in turn make it his own by effacing that stamp with the impress of his own personality. Every poet has " borrowed " — has had his sources; and so long as this transmutation takes place, it is mere borrowing, not stealing. Poe effected this transmutation; in it lies the absolute, complete justification of what he did.

Chivers apparently had mentioned the sources of " The Raven " to Poe: " It was not until after we had accused him of having derived it, soul and body, from the poem ' To Allegra Florence in Heaven ' that he wrote the *concession article* entitled ' The Philosophy of Composition.' " [8] All that Poe conceded in his article, however, was as follows: " Of

[8] *Waverley Magazine,* October 1, 1853, Vol. VII, p. 216.

course I pretend to no originality in either the rhythm or the meter of ' The Raven ': what originality ' The Raven ' has is in their combination into stanzas; nothing even remotely approaching this combination has ever been attempted." The last clause might well be boggled at, but we shall not bother. " The Philosophy of Composition " does not tell the whole story of how " The Raven " was written; it shows only what went on in Poe's full consciousness. He says nothing of literary sources (they were all pretty much out of sight in the melting pot); he says nothing of why such a subject and such a form appealed to him so strongly. He shows us merely how his intelligence molded the chaos as it surged upward, demanding manifestation.

" The Raven " was not the only poem of Poe's to be inspired by Chivers. For example, the idea of " Nacoochee " (1837) is taken over bodily into " Ulalume " (1847). Chivers (as is made clear in the last stanzas) is mourning a lost beloved; Poe, his " lost Ulalume." Chivers's lost beloved, Nacoochee, symbolizes the soul [9] and is actually named " Psyche " in stanza xxviii; Poe also introduces " Psyche my soul." Chivers contrasts Dian (chas-

[9] The unity of man and woman was a Swedenborgian belief, which Chivers accepted. See *The Sons of Usna* II, vii, p. 37.

tity) with Astarte (passion); so does Poe.[10] Both poets introduce a vision of Astarte. Nacoochee fears Astarte and her powers; so does Poe's Psyche. Ostenee has no such fear; neither has Poe's hero. In both cases, Death seizes the lady as a result. Chivers's poem was to have been continued — probably with the reunion of the lovers in Eternity; had this sequel

[10] Mr. Hervey Allen calls my attention to Henry Beck Hirst's charge that Poe borrowed "the mystical appearance of Astarte" from Hirst's own *Endymion* (his masterpiece, undeservedly forgotten) and to Poe's denial of the charge (Poe's Works, Virginia edition, Vol. XIII, p. 211). The facts seem to be these: in *Endymion,* the planet Venus is at her full when Dian descends to win the youth; and Venus, of course, is but another name for Astarte. But unfortunately, Hirst's Venus and Dian are in full accord, while Chivers's and Poe's Astarte and Dian are opposing influences.

We might add that Hirst's *Coming of the Mammoth* (reviewed by Poe in the *Broadway Journal,* July 12, 1845) ends with a sonnet entitled "Astarte," which begins —

> Thy lustre, heavenly star, shines over me!
> I, trembling, like Endymion over-bent
> By dazzling Dian, when with wonderment
> He saw her crescent light the Latmian lea.

Poe liked this poem well enough to quote it in full at the end of his review. Again, in Hirst's *Penance of Roland* (a volume showing frank borrowings from Poe) there is a poem entitled "Berenice," wherein the poet would lie at the feet of his beloved, to observe —

> The radiant glory of a face
> Which, even in dreams, adorns Italian skies
> Of passionate love, — the Astarte of their space!

and twenty lines later —

> By murmurous streams
> Sparkling with starry gleams,
> We'd pause, entranced by Dian's amber light.

But these quotations again show no contrast of the powers of Dian and Astarte, as in Chivers and Poe. The truth seems to be that whatever influence there was came from Poe (and Chivers, too), and not from Hirst. But Hirst should not really be dismissed thus, for he is a worthy poet, none the less, and his *Endymion* at least repays perusal.

ever been published, " Ulalume " might have been longer and ended differently.

Where did Poe get his idea for " The Conqueror Worm " (1843)? Readers of " The Death of Time " (*Nacoochee,* 1837) will remember:

> For lo! from out the confines of the sky
> A Tragedy of most celestial light,
> Whose Acts were written by the hands of God,
> And whose eventful scenes were laid in heaven,
> And where the Dramatist, that now appears
> In the last Act, was born. . . .

The music of this drama is furnished by the " deep celestial melody " of the earth, accompanied by " the organ of Eternity." Poe changed the hero of this supernatural play from Christ to the Worm; and accompanied it by the " orchestra " of the " music of the spheres."

Where did Poe get the idea for " The Bells " (1849)? After all this other evidence, we can at least sympathize with Chivers's claim that it was derived from his " Mother's Lament on the Death of her Child," written August 10, 1841, and published in the inevitable *Lost Pleiad* (1845):

> The funeral bell keeps tolling, keeps tolling,
> Keeps tolling for the dead;
> Whose azure round goes rolling, goes rolling,
> Like waters o'er my head.

I wish that we could absolve Chivers of undue borrowings as completely as we have absolved Poe. We may grant Chivers his right to Israfel and the Lost Pleiad, his priority in using trochaic octameter in a peculiar pattern for an elegy, and so forth. We must even admit that independently of Poe he had discovered that the sound and overtones of a poem may outweigh its literal meaning. But Chivers did write a few poems which were obviously indebted to his great friend, without surpassing their originals. One of these is the "Morcia Funebre" in *Virginalia,* which is based on "The Bells"; two more in the same volume, "Una" and "The Beautiful Silence," refer to Israfel's lute of heart-strings. How far Chivers may have thought that he was merely recovering his own does not matter. Furthermore, Chivers used some of Poe's names which furnished convenient feminine rhymes: *Aiden,* rhyming with *maiden* and *laden; Politian,* rhyming with *vision* and *Elysian; Auber; Weir;* and some others.[11] Poe's brand is on these words; and though the custom of borrowing melodious names was widespread just then, Chivers is to be convicted.

[11] The reader is warned, however, against charges of plagiarism founded on the Poeisms of "The Vigil in Aiden" and "The Fall of Usher." These are elegies on Poe, in which Chivers rightly and sensibly used Poe's own works as symbols of the dead poet. It has also been charged that Poe derived his inspiration from these poems of Chivers; but I think that that charge can be safely dismissed.

Yet not too hastily. Because of these obvious and superficial borrowings, all of Chivers's resemblances to Poe must not be called plagiarism. By far the larger part of them were independent development. Both men were born in the same year, read the same poets, and developed similar poetic tendencies. Both published characteristic verse before it is likely that either was influenced by the other. When they finally met, they proved a great stimulus to each other. They borrowed freely from each other: Chivers in the obvious and superficial things; Poe in the deeper, hidden things. This was the practice of the times. Neither resented the other's borrowings; indeed to the last they remained friends. Poe recited, among others, "To Isa Singing"[12] (which contained an Israfel reference) and praised publicly the originality of the very volume which influenced him so. Chivers, far from resenting being the inspiration of "The Conqueror Worm" and "Ulalume," referred to them both in "The Fall of Usher," and even wrote his other elegy to Poe, "The Vigil in Aiden," in his meter which had inspired Poe to "The Raven." And after Poe's death, for all the overstatements that Chivers made in self-defense, he was willing to write a life of Poe, exalt-

[12] Letter of Chivers, *The Century Magazine*, February, 1903, p. 555.

edly justifying the dead poet against Griswold's attacks.

Thus both Poe and Chivers proved much more generous to each other than their posthumous defenders. The question was of no importance whatsoever to the two poets during Poe's life. They knew that they were behaving as poets always behave. The question of " plagiarism " is merely of academic interest, and is to be solved only on the basis of æsthetic success. Any poet is entitled to borrow anything *which he can make his own*. Poe succeeded always; Chivers only occasionally. Of course it is interesting to know the sources of " The Raven "; but be they many or none at all, " The Raven " is what it is. And Chivers, on the other hand, will live only in footnotes if his fame is to be secured by dependence upon Poe's. But there is no need for this. Both poets have written enough good poems which no one else could have written, to establish their literary positions.

Chapter XI

Three Books in 1853

FROM 1845 to 1850, Chivers lived in Georgia, either at Oaky Grove, his father's estate two miles out of Washington, or at Villa Allegra, his own house in that city. But in 1850, he went to New York again, and began his contributions to the *Georgia Citizen*. " The Poet's Corner " printed old poems and new; " Correspondence " contained his " Letters from the North "; and under the title " Valley of Diamonds " he gathered together all manner of epigrams and ideas. These contributions reveal Chivers at his most characteristic, and his most readable, too; he chatters along, growling against this, raving against that, reveling in something else, recalling anecdotes and passages from books — pouring out the tidbits of a well-stocked and extraordinary mind. Chivers was never bored. Jenny Lind was in town — Bayard Taylor had won the $200 prize contest — Barnum was saying " A fool and his money " while he raked in what Chivers

calculated would be a million — Forrest was suing Willis; but how could any woman see anything in Nat Willis, that whippersnapper? — Mrs. Stowe had got out a slanderous book entitled *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* but the Abolitionists lied when they said it was selling — Powers's Greek Slave is a perfect symbol of the Crucifixion of Women, but " the muscles of her legs were inserted too high up in the thighbone for Beauty " — Tennyson ought to be the next Laureate, not Wilson — New York is the new Babylon, and its citizens wear " goatees," smoke nasty " segaws," and read the *Tribune.* . . . There are comments on music and machinery; Swedenborgian symbolism and Hebrew antiquities; stories, a play, and an epic; attacks on and defenses of Poe; street scenes and weather; reviews of important poems; a collection of epitaphs. Here, as a sample, is a description of a thunderstorm, sandwiched in between comments on going to church too often and thoughts on immortality:

> The lightning in his ponderous chariot of thunder is now rolling down, on bickering adamantine fire wheels, the cloudy stairs of Heaven — the echoes of whose billowy rumbling are now dying away in the far-off fields of space.
>
> The rain is now pouring down in torrents, in emulation of the deluge which overflowed the ancient earth. The Niobean Heavens, like the pathetic Rachel when she filled

Ramah with her lamentations for the loss of her beautiful children, seem pouring out of her breaking heart the entire fountain of her tears in sorrow for the degenerate children of the earth! Bend your divine wings, oh! you Dove-like mother of the universe, over the bowed head of this repentant world, and regenerate her with the new Baptism of your tears, into a rejuvenescent calm. Bow your head, oh! ye beautiful Heavens! that the fountains of living water may flow out and green the desert world with a new spring! Now the nun-like trees droop, in their religious penitence, under the perpetual washing which is to introduce them into a new life of greenness in this beautiful universal Church of God! They seem now weighed down beneath the joyful burden of the newly realized beatitudes. Clap your hands, oh! ye Stars of Heaven and sing aloud, ye beautiful sons of God! for the bridegroom of the earth is now ready for his bride! [1]

This storm took place in New Haven, where Chivers lived for a year and a half, at the Tontine Hotel. If New York was the modern Babylon, New Haven was just the reverse. The handsome city with its elms, its intellectual atmosphere, and its group of Southern sympathizers, struck Chivers as just about the ideal. " Since the advent of Spring upon this earth, this city has become as beautiful as the URANOPOLIS which the Angels built for Adam in Paradise. It ought not to be called *New Haven,*

[1] *Georgia Citizen,* June 28, 1851.

but *Sylvanopolis* — the city of the Woods." But sometimes the students acted in a way which the humorless Southerner did not approve of.

I went last night, by the invitation of the Students of *Yale College,* to witness the *'Presentation of the Wooden Spoon.'* From the *Ensignium* on the first page of the *Programme,* I supposed that I was going to witness something truly excellent, but I had not been there long before I found out that I was totally disappointed. The truth is, the whole performance was as ridiculous, in its very nature, as want of talent and bad themes could possibly make it. But, at the same time, I *must* say that it was *no less innocent.*

The salutatory, in Latin, by A. C. McKissack, of Tennessee, was really amusing, from the manner in which he introduced English words, and the novel use which he made of the Latin terminations. The Oration on the *Beauties of Crosby's Greek Grammar,* by C. M. Bliss, of Hartford, was as ridiculous as *want of talent* and the *insipidity* of the subject could possibly make it.

'The love of beauty and the beauty of love,' by E. Sterling, of Bridgeport, although a *beautiful subject,* was handled precisely in the same manner. How any young man *can,* for the *mere love* of fun, so debase the nature which God has given them, in debasing so sacred a theme as this, is beyond all comprehension. Any persons who would do so, are either totally ignorant of the mission of mind, or wilfully prodigal of the gift which God has bestowed upon them to do good in doing that which can only make the angels in Heaven weep!

Chivers had never outgrown the Baptist distrust of "levity"!

Towards the end of 1852, he went to Boston, a city which he did not like much, although he remained there for nearly a year. It was neither a modern Babylon like New York, nor another Eden, like New Haven. Perhaps Boston Abolition outweighed Boston Transcendentalism; perhaps the grandson of a Virginian saw nothing remarkable in Massachusetts; perhaps fidelity to Yale (in spite of the students' levity) prevented his mentioning Harvard (where Professors Longfellow and Lowell were teaching). Yet Boston was interested in Chivers; it picked out his best and wildest poems for publication. The *Boston Museum* of 1851 took six of his poems; in 1852 it became *Dodge's Literary Museum,* which took seven poems, as change of title did not cause change of taste; and when Chivers quarreled with the editor, the *Waverley Magazine* of 1853 was willing to take all it could get. Not until the controversy over Poe became unduly personal were his contributions stopped. And thereafter, except in the ever-faithful *Georgia Citizen,* Chivers published virtually no more poems in magazines.

One of these poems that Boston liked is worth reprinting here, not only as a new version of an old

refrain, but also as a first version of a poem that later was very much changed.

ROSALIE LEE

More coy than the wild goldfinches
  When they hunt for the butterfly,
Which the dew of the morning quenches
  In the psychical month of July;
Like the opaline dove's neck chiming
  Cherubic beauty for me,
Were her ovaline arms in their rhyming,
  Of my beautiful Rosalie Lee —
  Of my lamb-like Rosalie Lee —
  Of my Heaven-born Rosalie Lee —
Of my beautiful, dutiful Rosalie Lee.

Like the ivory gates of the morning,
  In the jaspery walls above,
Which the berylline clouds were adorning,
  Was the brow of my early love.
Like the Paphian moon uprising
  From her home in the soundless sea,
All the nymphs with her beauty surprising,
  Rose my beautiful Rosalie Lee —
  Rose my lamb-like Rosalie Lee —
  Rose my dove-like Rosalie Lee —
Rose my beautiful, dutiful Rosalie Lee.

Like the vesper nones from the islands,
  Vibrating from silver bells,
When they mourn through the azure silence
  Of the tear-baptized farewells!

Or the chimes from the Campanella
As they die over Adria's sea,
Born away to Isola Bella,
Died the voice of my Rosalie Lee —
Died my Christ-like Rosalie Lee —
Died my God-loved Rosalie Lee —
Died my beautiful, dutiful Rosalie Lee.[2]

Whoever cannot enjoy the psychical month July, ovaline arms that are rhymes, and an azure silence, cannot enjoy the real Chivers.

Meanwhile Poe's posthumous success drove Chivers on to tremendous efforts in his own behalf. Publications in magazines had proved to be nothing; he must center his endeavor on books. And in 1853 no fewer than three volumes of his appeared: *Virginalia* and *Memoralia* at Philadelphia, and *Atlanta* at Macon, Ga.

Virginalia; or, Songs of my Summer Nights, though not so well known as the *Eonchs of Ruby,* is by far Chivers's most interesting volume. It contains some of his most daring and successful meters, his wildest images. It is full of records of spiritual sensation, prophetic dreams, reveries that melt away into music, and other strange things. Metaphors are handled in an almost "metaphysical" success.

[2] *Boston Museum,* October 25, 1851, Vol. IV, p. 179.

Thoughts go to heaven like white birds soaring from the rosy nest of the heart; a maiden reading a poem is an angel singing as he climbs a ladder to God; a deaf-mute woman has broken two golden strings of her harp; a song rises from the fountains of the soul and cascades over the coral curves of the lips; lips are curled rose-petals springing from the stalk of the heart.

The most striking feature of *Virginalia,* however, is the triumph of sound. The verse, whether or not we catch its meaning, blazes and streams with gusts of music from a deeper dimension. Now we stop short, entangled in the hypnotic web of such a line as —

> Like the Lioness', lazy, their hazel hue.

Now we drift down a brook of pleasant images:

> On the Asphodelian Meadows,
> In the cool refreshing shadows
> Of the Trees of God, we made us
> Beds of flowers as white as snow,
> Where we lay, while on before us
> Flew the Angel-Hours in chorus
> Making all the air odorous
> In the days of long ago.

" Rosalie Lee " reappears, completely new, except for one stanza:

ROSALIE LEE

" Les anges ne sont plus pures que le cœur d'un jeune homme qui aime en verité." — Madame Dudevant.

On the banks of the yellow lilies,
Where the cool wave wanders by,
All bedamasked with Daffodillies,
And the bee-beset Crowtie;
More mild than the Paphian Luna
To her nude nymphs on the Sea,
There dwelt, with her milk-white Una,
My beautiful Rosalie Lee —
My high-born Rosalie Lee —
My child-like Rosalie Lee —
My beautiful, dutiful Rosalie Lee.

More coy than the wild Goldfinches,
When they hunt for the Butterfly,
Which the dew of the morning quenches,
In the psychical month July;
Like an opaline Dove's neck chiming
Cherubic beauty for me,
Were her ovaline arms in their rhyming,
Of my beautiful Rosalie Lee —
Of my lamb-like Rosalie Lee —
Of my Heaven-born Rosalie Lee —
Of my beautiful, dutiful Rosalie Lee.

Many mellow Cydonian Suckets,
Sweet apples, anthosmial, divine,
From the Ruby-rimmed Berylline buckets,
Star-gemmed, lily-shaped, hyaline —

Like that sweet golden goblet found growing
On the wild emerald Cucumber-tree —
Rich, brilliant, like Chrysoprase blowing —
I then brought to my Rosalie Lee —
To my lamb-like Rosalie Lee —
To my Dove-like Rosalie Lee —
To my beautiful, dutiful Rosalie Lee.

Warbling her wood-notes wild, she wended
Her way with the turtle Doves,
And the Wood-nymphs weird that attended
Her steps through the flowery groves.
In the light of her eyes of azure,
My soul seemed on earth to see
All that Heaven could give me of pleasure,
With my beautiful Rosalie Lee —
With my Heaven-born Rosalie Lee —
With my Christ-like Rosalie Lee —
With my beautiful, dutiful Rosalie Lee.

But my darling Ulpsyche sighing
Her soul out to give me delight,
Went away with the great Undying
To the Courts of the Heavenly Light.
Through an arc made in the azure
Of God's azimuth, Heaven to see,
There to dwell with the Angels in pleasure —
Went my beautiful Rosalie Lee —
Went my fair-browed Rosalie Lee —
Went my much-loved Rosalie Lee —
Went my beautiful, dutiful Rosalie Lee.

Through the Valley of Avalon lonely,
By the light of the argentine Moon,
From the presence that lived for her only
On the banks of the Rivers of Rune;
Through the Star-Islands studding the Ether,
With the Angels that took her from me —
(Though my soul in its sorrow went with her)
Soared my beautiful Rosalie Lee —
Soared my Christ-like Rosalie Lee —
Soared my God-loved Rosalie Lee —
Soared my beautiful, dutiful Rosalie Lee.

The third stanza has become famous, as Bayard Taylor, in his *Echo Club,* misquoted it into ungrammatical nonsense, and it is his version that is always reprinted. There have also been those, ignorant of American botany, who have been unduly delighted over the cucumber tree.

"Apollo" is a splendid experiment in pæons; Bayard Taylor quoted the twelfth and fifteenth lines as containing "one of the finest images in modern poetry."

APOLLO

What are stars, but hieroglyphics of God's glory writ in lightning
On the wide-unfolded pages of the azure scroll above?
But the quenchless apotheoses of thoughts forever brightening
In the mighty Mind immortal of the God whose name is Love?

Diamond letters sculptured, rising, on the azure ether pages,
That now sing to one another — unto one another shine —
God's eternal scripture talking, through the midnight, to the Ages,
Of the life that is immortal, of the life that is divine —
Life that *cannot* be immortal, but the life that is divine.

Like some deep impetuous river from the fountains everlasting,
Down the serpentine soft valley of the vistas of all Time,
Over cataracts of adamant uplifted into mountains,
Soared his soul to God in thunder on the wings of thought sublime.
With the rising golden glory of the sun in ministrations,
Making oceans metropolitan of splendor for the dawn —
Piling pyramid on pyramid of music for the nations —
Sings the Angel who sits shining everlasting in the sun,
For the stars, which are the echoes of the shining of the sun.

Like the lightnings piled on lightnings, ever rising, never reaching,
In one monument of glory towards the golden gates of God —
Voicing out themselves in thunder upon thunder in their preaching,
Piled this Cyclop up his Epic where the Angels never trod.
Like the fountains everlasting that forever more are flowing

From the throne within the centre of the City built on high,
With their genial irrigation life forever more bestowing —
Flows his lucid, liquid river through the gardens of the sky,
For the stars forever blooming in the gardens of the sky.

" The Poet of Love " excels in its frantic crescendoes and climaxes; Kipling thought well enough of it to borrow some lines for his " The Files."

THE POET OF LOVE

The Poet of Love receives divine ovation;
Not only from Angels' hands while here on earth,
But all the Ages echo back with salutation
The Trumpet of the Skies in praises on his worth;
And all the Islands of the Sea
Of the vast immensity
Echo the music of the Morns
Blown through the Corybantine Horns
Down the dark vistas of the reboantic Norns.*
By the great Angel of Eternity,
Thundering, *Come to me! come to me!*

From the inflorescence of his own high soul,
The incense of his Eden-song doth rise,
Whose golden river of pure redolence doth roll
Down the dark vistas of all time in melodies —

* The three Maidens (Nornir) who dwell in one of the fair Cities of Heaven by the Spring of Urdar, under the boughs of the great tree Igdrasel, whose names are Udr, Verthandi, and Skulld — Past, Present, and Future. They are Liosalfar — that is, Light Alfs — and are brighter than the sun. [T.H.C.]

Echoing the Islands of the Sea
Of the vast immensity,
And the loud music of the Morns
Blown through the Conchimarian Horns
Down the dark vistas of the reboantic Norns
By the great Angel of Eternity,
Thundering, *Come to me! come to me!*

With the white lightnings of his still small voice,
Deep as the thunders of the azure Silence —
He makes dumb the oracular Cymbals with their noise,
Till BEAUTY flourish Amaranthine on the Islands
Of all the loud tumultuous Sea
Of the vast immensity,
Echoing the music of the Morns
Blown through the Chrysomelian Horns
Down the dark vistas of the reboantic Norns
By the great Angel of Eternity,
Thundering, COME TO ME! COME TO ME!

Critics have usually dismissed these furious poems as mere madness; but even so, where else was such madness ever recorded upon paper? Chivers's mantic ecstasy is unique.

The fact is that in those pre-Swinburnean days, the emotional value of pure sound and image was little understood. " Kubla Khan " had set an example which nobody had followed. Poe occasionally had adventured in the harmonic realms, achieving such things as the following lines from " Ulalume ":

These were days when my heart was volcanic
  As the scoriac rivers that roll —
  As the lavas that restlessly roll
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
  In the ultimate climes of the Pole —
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
  In the realms of the Boreal Pole.

This is not quite nonsense, but very nearly. Chivers must have liked it, for it confirmed his own harmonic tendencies; but where Poe was deliberately daring, Chivers plunged headlong. The music of words! Might it not be *more* than an ornament? Might it not be the entire *raison d'être* of a poem, its sole excuse for existing? Long before, Chivers had come to this verge; now he flung himself recklessly over the brink. . .

As a result, he was building songs out of pure sound and a rich stream of apparently unrelated images. The meaning, if one looks for it, is usually there. But that is not the point.

Thus Chivers in the mid-nineteenth century anticipated the great discovery of *Symbolisme:* that poetry is an art constructed of abstract elements, in which the immediate meaning is comparatively unimportant. Before Verlaine he taught "de la musique avant toute chose"; before Mallarmé he

Washington, Ga., Feb. 21st 1847.

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My Dear Friend,

As I have not written to you in a long time, perhaps you would like to hear from me. In the first place, I am well and hearty, and long to see you. I received the paper, containing your letter and the notice of your writings, some time ago. I was delighted with your letter — that is, with the idea that you had not well again — and hope from the bottom of my heart, that you may remain so. I am sorry for your wife, because she suffers pain — but am sorrier for you, because, from what you say, she is nigh to the Angels, and you are recovering your strength to fight against the Devil, and poetry, with his emissions — fools. If you will come to the South to live, I will take care of you as long as you live — although, if ever there was a perfect mystery on earth, you are one — and one of the most mysterious. However, come to the South and live with me, and we will talk all these matters over at our leisure. I do not intend this for a letter, but just scratch it down to let you know that I am still in the land of the living — which, perhaps, you would just as soon not know as to know. What do I care for that — that is your own fault, if it be so — not mine. Bye-the-bye, have you ever seen a little Poem of mine entitled a "Song to the River Po," any where? If you have, you have seen a better notice of you

Letter from Chivers to Poe, Feb. 21, 1847

than you can took of me. But what of that? I have something now that you will like. If I can't get hold of something you have written lately, I should like it. Can't you send me something? I read your tale of the "Spectacles" to some ladies here the other day, and they shouted—particularly at that place where you speak of the old lady's "Bustle!" When they heard of the "universe of Bustle" maybe they didn't laugh—up to the hearing of the Gods!"

I sent you a Tale some time ago entitled, I believe, "The Return from the Dead"—or some such title. Well, I wish you to look over it, and correct any error you may see in it, and envelope it as at first, and direct it to Frederick W. Bartlett, Esqr., Atlanta, Ga. He has written to me for something for his paper, and I have nothing but that, which, perhaps, will suit him. He is a great friend of mine, and the Editor of the "Atlanta Luminary." I will notice your poems in the next No. I have spoken to him of you, and he likes you. Correct wherever you may detect, and send it to him. I will be in New York next month, and hope to see you. Send me any paper you can get hold of—for all though I get "legions" know—I want more. Believe me the true friend of

Edgar A. Poe; and if you don't believe it, it will make no difference — I will still be your friend. Give my sincere respects to your wife, and tell her, from me, to be in hopes of pleasure here on earth yet, out of sickness; but, that, whatever may be her fate in this life, there is rest in Heaven. There is a place where the Angels are crying,

Come, come to the Pure Land lying
Far up in the Very undying —
Where Ernest forever made.

Yours forever,
Thos H. Chivers

E. A. Poe, Esqr.

P.S. I do not intend this for a letter, but write to let you know that New York is not the place to live in happiness. I have lived there, and know all about it. Come to the South. Mr Stage is coming.

Farewell! V. A. C.

wrote verses provokingly contemptuous of exoteric continuity.

His most curious experiments, however, he never collected from the pages of the magazines which silently have preserved them for us. Chivers now was constantly watching for new materials to make new verses of; he was interested in the songs of birds, the metallic diapason of bells, the weird thin music of the Chinese, the puffing of a railroad. After quoting a negro song with the refrain " Too, Mark, a-Juba! " he wrote:

> There is no such rhythm as this in the Greek Poetry — nor, in fact, in any other Nation under the sun. There is no dance in the world like that of Juba — the name of that [illegible] provoking jig which accompanies this recitative — the very climax of jocularity — being as far above the Pyrrhic as the Tarantula in provoking laughter accompanied by irresistible shouts of uproarious hilarity.[3]

A stanza from a " Corn-Shucking Song," written at Lowell, Mass., August 3, 1853, and published in the *Georgia Citizen* for June 23, 1855, shows to what extent Chivers was able to use these Ethiopian rhythms:

Jinny bake de hoecake, Sally make de cawphy,
Nancy bile de baykon wid de brack-ey pea;

[3] *Century Magazine*, February, 1903, Vol. LXV, p. 555.

Cuffy blow de Ram's Hawn, Juba beat de Banjo —
  Dinah ring de Tin Pan to cawl us awl to Tea.
Pull away, Niggers! oh! pull away, Darkies!
  De Baykon's in de washpot, de bred upon de hoe;
Shuck de Cawn, Darkies! oh! shuck de Cawn, Niggers!
  De Mawnin' Staws a-risin', de Sebin Staws are low!
Git away de Cawn, Boys! git away de Cawn!
  Oh! git away de Cawn, Boys! git away de Cawn!
Linkydum-a-hyadum, a-linkydum-a-ho!
  Beller, Boys! beller! de Cawn is gettin' low!

The "Chinese Serenade for the Ut-Kam and Tong-Koo," in the *Literary Museum* for October 30, 1852, begins with the effect of a plectrum plucking on two strings:

Tu Du,
Skies blue —
All clear —
Fourth year,
Third moon,
High noon
At night;
And the stars shine bright. . . .

The poem is evidently intended for recitation: the rhythm swells, relents, and swells again, until it reaches its height with —

She is beautiful as the night with many moons!
I am terrible as the day with many suns!

Now she looks at my soul through her window,
Like the sun out of heaven at some Hindoo,
When he pays his devotion to the King of Day;
So I, Tsching-Foo, who am King of Son-Tay,
Fall down on my knees at the feet of the Queen of Cansay!

But she leaves her window, and the sound of a bronze gong punctuates the lover's despair, until the poem dies away:

Bo-au-awng, ba-ang, bing!
Bee-ee-eeing, ba-ang, bong!
So-au-awng, sa-ang, sing!
See-see-eeing, sa-ang, song!
Bing, bang, bong!

Chivers was particularly pleased with his "Railroad Song,"[4] which imitates the noises involved in "riding on a rail." Its clitta-clattas and chewey-witcheys are a striking anticipation of Vachel Lindsay's clangarangas. In this one poem, Chivers has left Romanticism for a modern Realism: the fire and iron of the material world are built up to the requisite poetic heights. The triplets give the necessary effect of a terrific rush, yet are kept from monotony by the use of repeated or false rhymes.

[4] *Georgia Citizen,* June 21, 1851; *Graham's Magazine,* February, 1852; *Waverley Magazine,* October 8, 1853.

Clitta, clatta, clatta, clatter,
Like the devil beating batter
Down below in iron platter —
Which subsides into a clanky,
And a clinky, and a clanky,
And a clinky, clanky, clanky,
And a clanky, clinky, clanky;
And the song that I now offer
For Apollo's Golden Coffer —
With the friendship that I proffer —
Is for Riding on a Rail.

In "The Roll of Fame," [5] one of his very most curious poems, Chivers abandoned imitative realism, and evolved lines so long that he actually transcended meter and wrote in cadences that anticipate Walt Whitman's ideal of the irregularly regular waves on a beach:

In the Autumn of the world, when the honey of the Summer still lay on the flowers of the years,
I stood on the evergreen banks of the beautiful River of Time,
And there heard the loud thunders, rolled off from the prows of the crystalline Spheres,
Break balmily against the white shore of my panting soul in utterance sublime.

In the Kingdom of Avaris I saw Beon the Divine,
Folding his milk-white Lambs in the evergreen Pastures of God's love,

[5] *Spiritual Telegraph*, September 9, 1854.

Near the Typhonian Kirjath Sepher hyaline,
Where Osariph lived, whose soul was as white as the breast of the Dove. . . .

Then, like the unfolding of some antediluvian iron Scroll,
With repercussive clang, like storm-winds when they rend the bosom of the Deep,
The Vail of Isis was rent in twain, revealing unto my more than raptured soul,
The dark Ænigma of the Grave, written in Dreams in the House of Sleep. . . .

Then were the crystalline doors of great Bethshimmin opened wide,
For the in-marching of the immortal Armies of the Skies,
Whose footsteps, on the Opal-pavements, sounded like the ocean at high tide,
In rhythmical answer to the Songs of the Gods from the four great white Eternities. . . .

All these poems are far too long to give in full here, which is a pity as they have never been collected; one, however, is short enough to give complete:

THE MIRAGE

A Vision of Beauty Seen Through the Ivory Gate of Dreams

She came into the night,
Like the Day does when it melts into the even;

And the darkness with her loveliness grew white,
As the Earth will when it puts off Hell to put on Heaven;
Like the white Lily, newly blown, fresh from its bath of dew —
Or the young Violet when its soul of snow is seen distinctly through its vial of blue.

The Night, with open arms,
Received her, as the Seasons did dear Venus from the Sea,
When the fond Zephyrs, drunk with the odor of her charms,
Wafted her on, in music, to Cytheria where she longed to be —
Like Death's dark Portals opening, with sweet music to receive some queen
Whom the unworthy grave shuts on, but whose white soul could know no sin.

Thus, through the Twilight of the even,
Like a white Swan soaring to the Southward through the night,
Guideless throughout the illimitable depths of Heaven —
She wandered, snowing her beauty all around her, clothed in white —
Unseen by any save this desolate soul which thrilled at her divine,
As Chaos did when God first hung the Sun in Heaven to shine.

Then, as the Sons of God all sang,
Answering the Morning Stars with shouts of joy above,
Till the great Gong of God, Heaven's Corybantine
Ocean, rang,
Vibrating through all space the diapason of their love —
So soared my soul in the white Chariot of ecstatic trance
Out of itself into the Heaven of her blue eyes that Apriled
all her countenance.

But as some new-born Star, unseen before,
Comes out of the doors of Heaven to shine, maddening
the Night,
With its wild luminous bliss, down to the very core;
Then into God's high Courts recedes again from sight,
Never to be beheld in all the desolate Heavens above —
So came she — faded — leaving me pining here with this
unutterable woe of love.[6]

Boston, *May* 10, 1853.

The second volume for 1853, *Memoralia; or, Phials of Amber Full of the Tears of Love,*[7] is proof that *Eonchs of Ruby* had not gone well after all; for the new volume, from page 27 to the end, consists of the unsold and decapitated *Eonchs of Ruby*. The title-page, index, and opening poem "The

[6] *Spiritual Telegraph,* September 30, 1854, Vol. III, p. 87; republished in *Partridge and Brittan's Library: The Spiritual Telegraph,* Vol. VI (1855), pp. 292–293.

[7] The *Preface* is dated Boston, January 1, 1853; the Harvard copy was received by the library on May 17, 1853.

Vigil in Aiden," [8] had been removed; in their place were substituted a new title-page and index, a *Preface* on the antiquity of poetry and the divinity of the poet, and six initial poems of varying dates and quality. The best of them is " Bochsa," an account of an ancient bard,[9] whose " polysongs " he learned " in interlunar swoons ":

> While from his fingers' ends the dews of sound
> Dript, changing into Jewels as they fell,
> Bright as stalactites of crystal hung
> In the Enchanted Caverns of the Nymphs.
> The lucid, liquid, silvery touch of his
> Soft fingers drew from out the strings such notes
> As only follow from an Angel's hand —
> Whose music seemed to run down from his soul
> And crystallize itself thereon in sparkling tones
> Of multicolored Jewels pure as love,
> And perfect as those twelve Foundation-stones
> Set in the Temple of the Living God.

This curious passage is the best in the new poems of this volume, which need not detain us further.

The last of the three 1853 volumes was *Atlanta: or the True Blessed Island of Poesy* (Macon, Ga.).

[8] On account of adverse criticism, and not from any hostility to Poe, since *Virginalia* contains another and better elegy to him, " The Fall of Usher."

[9] Bochsa was the great harpist, now sixty-five years old, whom Chivers had heard perform recently. (*Georgia Citizen,* October 30, 1852.)

It is " a Paul Epic, in Three Lustra," according to the title-page; it ran in the *Georgia Citizen* during January, then was set up as a pamphlet at the newspaper office.

At first glance, the Preface appears to be a translation into metaphoric language of passages from Poe's *Poetic Principle* (1850); but the date, July 18, 1842, would bear out Chivers's accusation that Poe had borrowed prose as well as poetry from him. Chivers also upholds the principle of variety in verse, and also instances *Paradise Lost* as an example of a poem too long to be pleasing, except in certain select passages. " The fact is, these are the only really poetical passages, the others being only the relatively connecting links of the whole. It is, therefore, obvious that the idiosyncratic merits of any poet depend entirely upon the manner in which he has realized his dreams of the *crystalline revelation of the Divine Idea.*" Chivers is trying, therefore, to write an " Epical Song," which will be " a melodious relation of an irrepressible yearning in the soul to unfold to itself its own intuitive longings after Divine Beauty." *Atlanta* is simultaneously epical, lyrical, and symbolic: " an experiment upon the minds of the Chosen Few." The *Preface* ends with these characteristic paragraphs:

From the Pisgah-top of the present, I look abroad upon the far-reaching Fields of the Future, into that Promised Land of Beauty, through whose verdant Vallies the rivers of milk and honey flow, and behold the Angels with their ploughs of Pearl breaking up the fallow-lands of the Oriental Fields of Heaven into Auroral furrows.

As the penitent Pilgrim, on his way to Mount Zion, reclines, at the noontide hour of the day, from the burning heat of the tropical sun, in the cool refreshing shadow of the Rock of Rimmon, so does my wearied soul hide itself away into an ecstasy underneath the odoriferous dove-wings of the Divine Queen of Heaven.

Ministering Angels wait upon the soul of every true Poet to lead him into the way of all Beauty, just as the Sephiroth, or Divine Splendors, of the Cabalistical Doctors, guided the hands of David into the Empyreal Realms of a newer melody while striking music from his ten-stringed Harp for the pacification of the troubled soul of Saul.

The *First Lustrum* opens with the pure and youthful loves of Count Julian and Ianthe. There is a revolt of the Indians, headed by the implacable chief, Lamorah, in which his favorite son, Yanassa, is captured and killed. Lamorah, in an avenging raid, kidnaps Ianthe, who Julian thinks has been killed. Lamorah's younger son, Ostenee, then falls in love with her; and jealous of anything which engages her affections, he shoots her pair of pet doves. But she hatches their two eggs " between the oval

apples of her breast"; and later makes use of one of the new birds to send Julian a message. Overjoyed to learn that she is still alive, he answers by means of the same bird, and sets out for the place of her captivity.

The *Second Lustrum* returns to old Lamorah. Aged, baffled, he is lonely for his dead son Yanassa; and he thinks he can still hear the voice of the youth in the prophetic murmur of the shells upon the shore. Then Julian arrives, in the garb taken from Yanassa when he was captured, and the old man is actually deceived into the belief that his son has returned from the land of ghosts. Together, at Julian's command, they enter the "crescent-like Canoe"; and all night they paddle across the inland sea to Eden Isle, which they reach at dawn.

And here is Ianthe, bathing among the wild swans. At first she is afraid that the hated Ostenee is pursuing her again, and she flees to the shore. Julian, "in manly modesty," hides till she is clothed; then, while she plays with her pet fawn,

> Its trumpet-nostrils, lifted high in air,
> Clear as the Hollyhock when first in bloom—

Julian discovers himself, and joyfully she yields to him.

The *Third Lustrum* describes their life in the Earthly Eden,

> Beside the golden-sanded streams that ran
> Along the Violet Valley near the Cave,
> Whose crystal-fretted rich magnificence
> Did emulate the glory of the sky.

In this cave they spend their nights upon furs decked with prismatic pearls, where they consummate their desires. In the mornings they explore the Valley with its myriads of birds and fruits. It is " the Golden Age of their deep love," when they behold clearly the Eternity that lies just above them; and gradually they perfect themselves.

Here Chivers leaves them, and the poem ends. Its symbolism hardly needs explanation. Man's finer self is stolen from him by his baser passions; but eventually he tricks them into serving him. All night they cross the inner sea; and with the dawn appears the Island of Poetry, where his ideal lives, still unblemished. In the glorious cave (the ageless symbol of the body, made famous by Plato) he perfects himself in union with his higher self, through the medium of complete love.

The general effect of *Atlanta* is that of a richly sustained and sensuous melody. The words are sim-

ple, the cadences are calm. It is a celebration of nuptial joys and a feast for the senses. The approach to the mystical Island (*Lustrum the Second*) is one of many passages that might be selected as a sample:

For as the Dawn broke slowly in the East,
Withering the Moon into the light of Heaven,
Afar off in the bosom of the Lake
Tinged with the radiance of the rising sun
All golden in the Temple of the Morn —
Looking like some great sea of molten gold —
(Like some great Emerald Mountain rising up —)
They saw the EDEN ISLE burst on their sight!
The Hills, like some great Caravan encamped,
At noontide, on the desert of the world —
Still billows of the World's great terrene sea —
(As if they were the mighty graves of Gods —
The rising stepstones to the Deity —
Bristled with lofty pines, that in the distance looked
Like mystic moss covering their purple backs —
Spread out in undulating lines afar —)
Were deluged with rich radiance, as they lay
Propping the thunder-clouds of Heaven, beneath
The golden glory of the springing Sun
Rising in such Empyreal pomp from out
The Emerald splendor of the Eastern Sea —
Flooding, with his great Seraph-splendor, all
The cavalcade of golden glory-clouds
That rolled, in lofty mountain-piles, on high,
Like incense from an Altar up to God —
Or that great Ladder Jacob saw at night,

On Bethel-plain, reaching from Earth to Heaven —
Pavilioning his glory. While, to the right,
As they rowed on, nearing this Blessed Isle,
A flock of wild Swans, from the Jasper reeds,
With side-long wings, rose up, darkening the sun,
Whose clamorous shouts, redoubled by the Hills,
Filled the wide Heavens with jubilations loud;
And after circling on their snowy wings,
Glinting the glory of the golden sun —
Chequering the Lake with moving shadows — down
They all descended, with Seraphic sail,
On moveless wings, upon the Lake again,
Like living pearl, or Angels out of Heaven,
Far out of reach of farthest shot of man,
Floating among the reeds in jocund joy.
Upon the sand, close by the water's edge,
Where smote their little boat upon the shore,
Clusters of luscious grapes were scattered round
In prodigal profusion on the ground,
And ebon Muscadines of lustrous black,
Like drops of polished night, weighed down their vines,
So that the cool lips of the crystal wave,
Swayed by the presence of the noontide breeze,
Lapped them with liquid kisses from the shore,
Till they went dangling far away from land,
Like little ebon barques upon the Lake.

There are echoes of Milton's Eden, with its vegetarian diet; there are also reminiscences of Keats's delectable feast, laid out by Porphyry while Made-

line was dressing for the elopement. But the whole is quaintly Americanized. Instead of —

> . . . candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
> With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
> And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
> Manna and dates in argosy transferr'd
> From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one
> From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon;

Ianthe serves Julian with —

> . . . golden luscious Nectarines, Apples, Pears,
> And Mangoes, yellow Plums, delicious Dates —
> Conserve of Roses mixed with Damson Cheese,
> And Curd, made of the creamy milk of Does,
> Sweetened with sugar from the Maple-tree —
> Sweeter than Ring-Dove, Turkey, or the Swan,
> Or softly macerated flesh of Deer.

Were we asserting that *Atlanta* was a masterpiece, then we might well protest against the reminiscence. But since this is not the case, I, for one, find that even this fault adds to the delightfulness of the poem. It gives it a humanity, a place in time, which greater works must renounce.

In June, 1853, the *Southern Literary Messenger* took its third and last notice of Chivers by reviewing *Atlanta* most unfavorably; calling his " crystalline revelation " as " clear as mud."

Chapter XII

The Last Effort: Deirdre in Georgian

DOMESTIC life atoned somewhat for the failure of the poet's fame. On June 19, 1853, another child was born — Thomas H. Chivers, Jr., a boy who survived his father. There were also two girls, Emma Isadore, now the oldest, and later Fannie Isobel, the youngest. All three children married.

In 1854, Chivers wrote a five-act play, *The Sons of Usna,* based on the legend of Deirdre (whose name he transmuted to Daidra). But no publisher could be found, so he laid it aside. He was not bothering the magazines any more.

In 1855, he left the North forever. No doubt his outspoken objections to Abolitionism were becoming less timely on that side of the Mason and Dixon line; and on July 4, after he got home, the *Georgia Citizen* called upon him, as a prominent citizen, to give his view of the political situation. He replied most satisfactorily:

The glory of America is in her Republicanism. . . . As the creation of the world was the realization of the sublimest Ideal of God in Harmony, so was the foundation of this Government the realization of the Democratic Ideal. . . . It is, therefore, obvious that no Roman Catholic foreigner should be allowed to vote . . . until after the expiration of *twenty-one years*. . . . I am, therefore, in favor of the repeal of the naturalization laws — fixing the term of probation at *twenty-one years*. . . . I am in favor of abiding by not only the letter, but the spirit, of the CONSTITUTION — this being the glorious MAGNA CHARTA of our Liberties. . . . I am opposed to the union of Church and State — although in favor of suffusing the body of the State with the divine spirit of Religion. . . .

I am in favor of the Union *as it now exists* — hoping that it may forever remain so — but am *more in favor of the South* than the North — believing, at the same time (although deprecating the event) that the day will come when the South will find it to her interest to withdraw herself politically, as she has already done *religiously,* from communion with the North — not from the want of the present reciprocity of mutual interests — *but wholly on account of the aggravating insolence of Fanaticism.*

I am conscious of the superior resources of the South, and hope that the day is not far distant when the State of Georgia will stand, side by side, on the same PLATFORM OF LEARNING AND URBANITY with the glorious State of Massachusetts. . . . Education is the civilizer of the world. . . .

We are as infinitely above *Priest-craft* as *King-craft* — despising them as we hate the Devil — they being the

illegitimate offspring of his Satanic Majesty — whose Kingdom is of the eternal Night — loving the Angels in Heaven as we sincerely despise the Children of Hell. Let us, therefore, adopt the graphic Motto inscribed on the glorious BANNER OF THE TRUE SONS OF LIBERTY — AMERICANS SHALL RULE AMERICA — for she is as beautiful to her friends as the Moon-illuminated Night adorned with many Stars — but as terrible to her enemies as a day with ten thousand Suns.

Yours very truly,
THOS. H. CHIVERS

So very satisfactory was all this that a committee of citizens, on June 10 of the following year, requested him to deliver a Fourth of July poem. He protested that he had not been well for two weeks — that the time was too short; but on June 18, inspiration descended, and he wrote an enormous oration in verse: twenty-nine twelve-line stanzas, each followed by the same eight-line chorus. But he was still too unwell to deliver it; so he printed it instead. The title reads: *Birth-Day Song of Liberty. A Paean of Glory for the Heroes of Freedom* (Atlanta, Georgia, 1856).

Chivers, like Swinburne, always tended to leave Reason soon for Rhapsody; but who wants to be reasonable on the Fourth of July? The poem fitted the occasion. It was filled with references to the sun

playing upon his thunder-harp, the Freeman's Thor-Hammer, the golden winged Phœnix of Liberty, and the Orphic Evangels of the Angels — all in anapests tumbling over themselves into pæons. One stanza (the last) is enough here:

Thus Eternity's Rose in fruition's sweet blossom
  Blazes out from its bud in new beauties alway,
That sweet Nosegay of Freedom which grows in Christ's bosom
  And fills the wide world with its fragrance to-day.
Should your cups overflow with the white wine of pleasure —
  Should your hearts overflow with the red wine of love —
Pour them down at one draught — pledge your souls without measure —
  So the Gods drink together in the White Halls above.
See them cluster, like stars, at the crystalline Portals,
  Filling Heaven with their shouts poured for Earth's Jubilee,
Weaving Garlands of Glory for the New-born Immortals
  Who have died for the Beautiful, the land of the Free!
    Strike — strike the bold harp! &c.

In September, he was elected Professor of Physiology and Pathology at the Oglethorpe Medical College of Savannah;[1] but he declined the position, although he contributed three articles to the *Oglethorpe Medical and Surgical Journal,* which did not

[1] *Spiritual Telegraph,* October 18, 1856.

appear, however, until 1858, when they were accompanied by his obituary. They prove that the author of *Search After Truth* had declined the proffered chair wisely. He had other things to think of: Chivers was never bored. Besides his family and his books, there was his art: he painted portraits of his family and made sketches, and was generally known as an artist. He had always been interested in machinery, and he invented a " Throwstring Mill " for spinning, doubling, and twisting silk, which gained some reputation.[2]

In October, 1856, he moved from Washington to Decatur, naming his new home " Villa Allegra," after his old one. No reason for this remove has ever been published; but a letter from a resident of Washington says that " he was a strange man, and here where he was born and reared, he was considered crazy." He had lived in the North too much for his fellow townsmen to be used to his ways; and his personality always had been strongly marked. Editors had frequently commented in print on the arrogant letters that accompanied his poems; and the *Spiritual Telegraph,* noticing his appointment to the Oglethorpe professorship, felt free to say: " The characteristics of the man are such as to render him

[2] Harrison: *Life and Letters of Poe,* Vol. II, p. 283.

in some respects peculiar; but the lines which determine his individuality arrest our attention by their eccentricity rather than their genuine boldness or the harmony of their natural relations." But of course Chivers had been attacking Spiritualism, and the *Telegraph* had changed its mind about his poetry. On the other hand, the *Georgia Citizen* contained tributes from the Danish scholar, John Gierlow, and others, which showed that there were those who held him in high esteem and affection. The portrait of the poet perhaps tells us more about the man than anything else. We see long hair pushed back from a splendid brow; eyes piercingly sorrowful; a thin intelligent nose; and a set mouth, almost cruelly stubborn.

In 1858, he published for the last time. *The Sons of Usna, a Tragi-Apotheosis in Five Acts,* was printed at his expense in Philadelphia. It may well be asked where Chivers, at such an early date, and in America too, discovered the story in time to be the first to dramatize it.[3] It had not been known long to

[3] After Chivers, we find the following works on Deirdre (exclusive of literal translations):

Robert Dwyer Joyce: *Deirdrè* (Boston, 1876).

Sir Samuel Ferguson: *Deirdre* (in his *Poems,* London, 1880).

Douglas Hyde: Déirdre (in his *Three Sorrows of Story-Telling,* London, 1895).

John Todhunter: *The Fate of the Sons of Usna* (in his *Three Irish Bardic Tales,* London, 1896).

the world at large. Among the poems attributed to Ossian is *Dar-Thula: a Poem,* (1762), in which James Macpherson made an unusually bad hash of the old legend. Even the heroine's name is wrong. At the catastrophe, Dar-Thula arms herself to join the three Sons of Usnoth in the ultimate battle; then, when they are slain, she stands "in silent grief," to fall at last, arrow-pierced, upon her beloved Nathos. This silence of hers is enough to damn Macpherson; he simply did not appreciate poetry. Deirdre was never given to silence; and her long rhapsody at this particular moment has been

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Herbert Trench: *Deirdre Wedded* (London, 1901).

"Fiona Macleod" [William Sharp]: *Deirdrê and the Sons of Usna* (Portland, Me., 1903).

"Fiona Macleod": *The House of Usna, A Drama* (Portland, Me., 1903).

Charles Leonard Moore: *The Red Branch Crests* (Philadelphia, 1904).

George Steele: *Deirdre, A Tale of Ancient Erin, and Other Verse,* (Whitewater, Wis., 1904).

"A. E." [George Russell]: *Deirdre* (Dublin, 1907).

Thomas O'Kelley: *Déirdre* (a drama in Gaelic, 1909).

William Butler Yeats: *Deirdre* (London and Dublin, 1907).

John M. Synge: *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (Churchtown, Dublin, 1910).

After these came the deluge. All of them (except possibly O'Kelley's drama, which I have not read) follow the old story carefully, with but minor changes; such as furnishing Deirdre with poison or knife, rather than letting her die of pure grief and love; warning her of Conor's treachery by human agency, and not by dreams and premonitions; curtailing her prophetic lamentations; omitting Caffa's rôle; *etc.* Synge's play is by far the best; yet even he tones down the old legend, either to make his play more "human" (!) or to avoid dramatic difficulties. Chivers's play remains not only nearest to the feeling of the original (for all his changes and additions) but is decidedly the biggest *in conception,* though not in execution.

Winthrop Tilley's *Literary Treatments of the Deirdre Story in English* (Master's thesis, Brown University, 1-N,-M928ti) contains a very extensive bibliography and discusses Chivers's play, pp. 38–40, 56, 82.

made famous by bard upon bard. Indeed, in her *liebestod,* Deirdre is inferior only to Cleopatra and Isolde.

Macpherson was not corrected until the Gaelic Society of Dublin began its publications. The third pamphlet of Volume I of its *Transactions* (1809) was a collection of manuscripts upon *Deirdri, or, The Lamentable Fate of the Sons of Usnach,* with translations into English upon the opposite pages. Theophilus O'Flanagan, the collector and translator, quoted from the Rev. Jeoffrey Keating's *Complete History of Ireland* (the first volume of which was not issued till 1811), then added the ancient poetic variants of the story.

Chivers had always been curious about ancient legends. He had mixed Christian, Greek, Scandinavian, and Hebraic mythologies freely; as far back as 1845, he had published a sonnet on a tale of the Irish princess, Fionnuala.[4] Now O'Flanagan and Keating came his way; he saw the material for a great drama. Some of his scenes are almost literal transcriptions from the Gaelic. *The Three Sorrows*

[4] *Simms' Magazine,* December 1845, Vol. II, p. 420; republished *Ladies' National Magazine,* April, 1847, Vol. XI, p. 128; collected *in Eonchs of Ruby* (1851), p. 146. Chivers's source may have been Sylvester Judd's *Margaret* (1845), p. 410: "Does Christ haunt the world like Fionnulla, the daughter of Lir, sighing for the first sound of the mass-bell that was to be the signal for her release?"

of Story-Telling (a Milesian manuscript in O'Flanagan's collection) contains the originals of Act II, Scene 1; Act III, Scene 8; Act IV, Scenes 1, 2, 3, 5–8, 10–14; while other scenes are taken directly from Dr. Keating's *History*. The laments which Chivers put into his Daidra's mouth are often but adaptations of the original Irish poems.

His poetic intuition also kept Chivers very near to the atmosphere of the original legend. He believed firmly in such dreams and prophecies as were ascribed to Deirdre; to have changed her premonitions and keens into commonplace warnings and despairs would have seemed to him a silly profanation. His Daidra remains the Helen-Cassandra of Ireland. Caffa's part has usually been neglected, but Chivers magnified it, remembering the wisdom and power ascribed to the ancient sages. The magical experiments are quite after the old stories. In fact, between Daidra, Caffa, and Lavercam, the supernatural constantly bursts through into the created world, quite after the style of El Greco's *Burial of Count Orgaz.*

Chivers is more faithful to the original than any other adapter. But the original did not go far enough. Chivers superimposed his own metaphysics upon the Irish story, until his drama becomes a cross

between *Dr. Faustus* and *Festus*. He disliked the tragic ending; and to reconcile conflicting elements in the legendary accounts of Caffa, he made his magical ocean an illusion only, to test the validity of Conor's word. Conor's breaking of it is the last step in his damnation. Then the Sons are called back to life, and all ends happily. Again, Chivers took the name Darthula from Macpherson; applied it to a daughter of the Scottish king; and then created a passion between her and Ardan, which not only liberates Daidra from the Scottish king, but eventually wins his forces to join the attack on Conor.

Most striking of all Chivers's additions was the love-interest between Caffa and Lavercam. To do this with propriety, Lavercam was raised from her twin aspects of intriguing maid and complacent duenna into Daidra's Guardian Angel — a soul who has returned to earth in another body, to aid by means semi-supernatural the will of Heaven in uniting the lovers and in baffling Conor. Caffa is, of course, very high in the scale of evolution. Like all true theosophists, he has access to all mystical literature, past and future; and from Lucifer himself he forces the knowledge which we of today can get more easily through reading the Kabalah, Pythag-

oras, Plato, and Swedenborg.[5] Caffa was not born to die: he was of the Enochdiani,[6] and eventually is raised direct into heaven.

But sage though he is, he has his problem: that of his love for Lavercam. Through his preternatural wisdom, Caffa knows that husband and wife are but the two halves of one spirit; and therefore Slessama,[7] his dead wife, should claim everlasting fidelity; otherwise, in Eternity, he might find himself a monstrosity of three halves.[8] His final solution of the problem is that, since the Love is the same, there can be no metaphysical objection to a second wife. And in the ultimate apotheosis, it is revealed to him that Slessama and Lavercam are actually the same, though in two different bodies.[9]

[5] The germ of this probably lay in the *Luciferian Revelation,* a manuscript of which Poe wrote (July 22, 1846): "I have been looking over your *Luciferian Revelation* again. There are some points at which I might dissent with you — but there [are] a 1000 glorious thoughts in it." Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* may have suggested to Chivers the possibility of introducing into a drama such metaphysical discussions with the Devil; and of course Bailey's *Festus* was extremely popular just then.

[6] "It may be conjectured that these beings are of the race of Enoch and Elias, who were wrapt away into another world wherein they are still supposed to retain their mortal bodies. The prophets mentioned are according to mystic speculation by no means the only persons who have thus been 'caught up to heaven,' *i.e.,* into the unseen, without dying in the flesh." (A. E. Waite: *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus,* Vol. II, p. 365.)

[7] This name was taken from the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Dublin,* Vol. I, p. 135.

[8] A similar problem is suggested in *The Vigil in Aiden,* where Chivers was discussing Poe's problems.

[9] This was merely another means of symbolizing the identity of the Love.

Though *The Sons of Usna* is not Chivers's best play, it is one of his most curious works. Nowhere else is he so completely himself, both for good things and bad. The theme was one which gave full scope to his rhapsodies and melodramas. Reverberant supernaturalisms, exaggerated passions, poetic improvisations, all accord thoroughly with his theme. Even his richly embroidered figures of speech and his elaborated conversations are quite Celtic. In the banqueting hall, Conor addresses this compliment to his nobles:

> I thank you for your love.
> You sit here on the Benches of the Gods,
> Around this central Sun of all your light,
> Like Stars in Heaven, all singing while you shine —
> Reflecting back the glory you receive.
> Like Morning Glories ranged around their stems,
> Blowing their purple Trumpets at the skies
> To hail the dawn; so sit ye blooming here,
> Chanting sweet Hymns of Praises to your King.

Cuchullan replies:

> Your golden words inwoven with the silk
> Of silver, embossing flowers of rarest truth,

Blake, with the same hypothesis, met the same difficulty in his *Milton,* where he solved it not dissimilarly. He lumped together, not only Milton's three wives, but the three daughters as well, into one "Sixfold Emanation."

Become the garments of divinest forms
Of Beauty, voluptuous with pure love.
Cornelian cherries, grapes of amethyst,
And rich barbaric pearls do curdle on
The web, in the grotesquest forms of Art,
Making an Eden of the priceless work,
By the caduceus of your Art, twined by
The serpent of your power, you did all this.

Conal Carnach adds his own compliment:

His thoughts flowed from his soul in words of love,
Like the majestic march of some great host
Of liberated peers, going to receive
Their crowns of glory from the hands of kings.

The love-scenes furnish some characteristic images:

Thy voice has stolen the music of the skies —
Making melodious all my thoughts; thy tongue
Striking the rosy bell of thy sweet mouth
Jewelled with priceless pearls, to heavenly tones,
Above all music, save the Saints in Heaven. . . .

Thou art my Tree of Heaven, on whose white boughs
Sit Angel-thoughts, like heavenly Nightingales,
Singing immortal songs. . . .

Her eyes were of that neutral violet tint,
Whose soft serenity of saintly glow
Lay in the shadows of her moonlike brow
Like Heaven at twilight, under some clear lake
Born of the crystal of the Eternal Wells. . . .

Down from the Alpine peaks of her white youth
She came, crowned with the snows of innocence,
White as the bays the Angels wear in Heaven.

There are more ominous notes. When Conor accuses the prophet Caffa of flinging dust in his eyes, Caffa replies:

Pure diamond-dust ground off by Heaven's own wheels
Gyrating in the eternal clock, whose bell
Of gold will soon be heard tolling thy death,
With blindfold swing, to all the living stars!

And soon Caffa hears the arrival of the fatal demons:

I hear the cymbal sound of their great wings
Scourging the darkness as they climb the steep
Precipitous, adamantine sides of Hell.

Such are a few of the better passages, culled at random. But Chivers's usual faults are also present. Caffa, though at one time " plumed for early flight to Heaven, wearing Ezekiel's inkhorn by his side," can be awed by the death of Conor into words better fitted for Martin Scriblerus:

Oh! what an awful sight is this! — to see
God's Angel, called the God of Death, turn out
A tenant from his body-house, because
He had refused the heavenly Landlord rent!

Worse yet, Chivers indulges in the tragic pun. The very first scene includes a reference to a raven (hovering above a dead calf) as " a Raven-ous bird " ![10]

The Sons of Usna made no stir whatsoever. But Chivers was used to this; and soon he was past caring. He was taken ill suddenly; on December 18, 1858, he wrote his will, and died that night, an hour after midnight[11] at Villa Allegra, leaving the poetic field to the already triumphant Longfellow.

[10] Chivers may have committed this with references to some theory of mystical philology; as the old negro explained, when Adam saw the fox, he recognized in him the foxiest of them all, so he just naturally had to name him ' fox.' But Chivers may have been remembering *Paradise Regained*, II, 276–269.

> And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
> Food to Elijah bringing even and morn —
> Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they brought.

Indeed, Milton was master of the unconscious pun. What could be more deliciously appropriate than his " bright harnessed Angels " in the Bethlehem stable?

[11] The date of his death is therefore sometimes given as December 18, instead of 19.

Chapter XIII

Colphon: The "Lost Poet"

IN THE Town Cemetery at Decatur rises a large draped urn of marble. Upon the supporting cube is this inscription:

Here lie the remains of
Thomas H. Chivers, M. D.
Of his excellence
As a lyric Poet,
His works will remain a
monument for ages
after this temporary tribute of love
is in dust forgotten.
This soul winged its flight
Heavenward
December 19, 1858,
Aged 52 years.[1]

No writer is so great, but he must suffer, sooner or later, his eclipse. Fashions change; the public brain cannot hold a great idea long. For centuries

[1] The other two inscriptions read: "Harriet H. Chivers / wife of / T. H. Chivers / Born Feb. 2, 1819 / Died March 25, 1888. / Jesus called her home." "Thos. H. Chivers / Born June 19, 1853 / Died Jan. 7, 1892." For this information I am indebted to Mr. W. S. Irvine of Atlanta, Ga.

after one civil war, Chaucer was remembered merely as a quaint old writer with a knack at a bawdy tale. From another civil war the name of Shakspere emerged as that of a man who, in spite of an obscure native genius, could not write, yet did knock together a tragedy or two about a crazy prince or a jealous husband. Milton is in his obscurity now; although the universities give courses on him, the great ideas for which he sacrificed his eyesight and risked his life mean absolutely nothing. Lesser men suffer diversely; Shadwell was slain with a couplet, while Lee held the stage for a century, then passed from sight. Some, like Blake and Melville, die unknown. All must go through it: oblivion is time's test; and those who reappear have surely won their place.

Oblivion swept quickly over the name of Chivers, this poet born out of time and place. Had he been of the North, the literary coteries there would surely have pruned and preserved him. Had he come but a little later, his technique would have been better, and would have found a prepared public. But time and space were against him. Then, to the aid of Oblivion, came General Sherman marching to the sea. The poet's house lay in the fatal track; but Mrs. Chivers was a Northern woman, and the house still

stands. It is said, none the less, that many of the manuscripts suffered.

However, if " the wild Mazeppa of letters " (as Simms once called him) was to Americans lost in the wilderness of the Past, his influence was being felt abroad. Poe, of course, had reached France and England, where Baudelaire and Swinburne were magnifying his praises. Chivers also reached England somehow, possibly in Poe's train; and the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, always watching for rarities, read him. Bayard Taylor visited Swinburne, and during the conversation mentioned the Southern poet. " Oh, Chivers, Chivers," cried Swinburne in his peculiar voice, " if you know Chivers, give me your hand." [2] Stedman says that Swinburne and Bayard Taylor used to recite the strange stanzas to each other " with shouts of delight." [3] From this arose quite a tale of Swinburne's Olympian ridicule. Ridicule there may have been; but there was something else as well; for Swinburne found Chivers's carefully rhythmed and alliterated stanza-forms very much to his liking.

Long since the comparison has been made [4] be-

[2] Benton, p. 30.

[3] Edmund Clarence Stedman: *Poets of America,* Boston and New York, 1885, p. 250.

[4] Alphonso G. Newcomer: *The Poe-Chivers Tradition Reëxamined* (*The Sewanee Review,* January, 1904).

tween Swinburne's famous poems and Chivers's forgotten ones. Professor Newcomer has printed them side by side to prove obvious borrowings.

Her eyes, lily-lidded, were azure,
  Cerulean, celestial, divine —
Suffused with the soul-light of pleasure,
  Which drew all the soul out of mine.
She had all the rich grace of the Graces,
  And all that they had not to spare;
For it took all their beautiful faces
  To make one for Lily Adair.

So Chivers; then Swinburne:

Cold eyelids that hide like a jewel
  Hard eyes that grow soft for an hour;
The heavy white limbs and the cruel
  Mouth like a venomous flower;
When these are gone by with their glories,
  What shall rest of thee then, what remain,
O mystic and somber Dolores,
  Our Lady of Pain?

Again Professor Newcomer indicates the similarity of the cadences in "Fragoletta" and "Félise" to Chivers's "Isa Singing":

Upon thy lips now lies
  The music dew of love;
And in thy deep blue eyes,
  More mild than heaven above
  The meekness of the dove.

An even more interesting parallel occurs in the case of Rossetti. Soon after *The Lost Pleiad* appeared in 1845, he and his brother, W. M. Rossetti, read it, and were " much amused at a certain combination of helter-skelter fervor and profusion, and of oddity, which marked its pages." [5] Twenty years later, when Dante Gabriel Rossetti met Horace E. Scudder, he inquired about Chivers, and on learning nothing, extracted Scudder's promise to inquire. Scudder's letter [6] to William Rossetti is illuminating:

9 Brookline Street, Boston
24 April, 1866.

My dear Sir, — Since my return to America in November last I have kept in mind a request of your Brother's that I should find out something about the astonishing Chivers — a poet in spite of his name; but, though I have asked Professor Lowell and Mr. Fields, both of whom had correspondence with him, they could tell me nothing beyond the fact that he was a Georgian by birth (American, not Asian Georgia), but recently was living in Washington. Further productions may no doubt be expected, for Fields declared that one of his letters mentioned a poem on which he was engaged " of the size of *Paradise Lost.*" So you see what is before you. Fields irreverently described him moreover as a bore whose foolscap-letters — the poet always using that style of paper — he had unfortunately destroyed; for he began to think that they

[5] W. M. Rossetti: *Rossetti Papers, 1862 to 1870,* London, 1930, p. 180.
[6] *Ibid,* pp. 180–181. Called to my attention by Dr. Lewis Chase.

possessed a value aside from that intended by the author. Mr. Lowell told me that Chivers had sent him his poetry, and he had presented half of the volumes to the Harvard Library.[7] He thought him a rather droll illustration of the shell of Shelley. I have tried in vain to get hold of his books. Somebody else must be on his trail — if it is not the doctor himself — for one of our most knowing second-hand booksellers told me that he had been enquired after at his store. . . Horace E. Scudder.

Already the second-hand bookstores were being searched for the volumes which are now so excessively rare.

About 1847[8] Dante Gabriel Rossetti wrote the "Blessed Damosel," a poem about a dead girl still in love with the living poet. Idea and atmosphere seemed absolutely original when it was published (in 1850); but how Chiversian! — improved Chivers, of course; yet the same jumble of lilies, singing stars, tides of light, floods of ether, deep wells of light, celestial songs, golden gates, and heavenly girls with melodious names. Moreover, the basic theme of Rossetti's masterpiece — the dead

[7] Lowell presented to the Harvard Library copies of *Nacoochee* (which contains some rather hasty and much amused notes in Lowell's hand), and the *Sons of Usna*. Professor Francis Bowen presented *Memoralia* and *Atlanta. The Lost Pleiad* was given in 1851 by William Francis Allen "of the senior class." Lowell's *Lost Pleiad* is at Brown. There are no letters from Chivers in the Lowell manuscripts at Harvard.

[8] *Dictionary of National Biography*, art. Rossetti, D. G., Vol. XLIX, p. 284.

woman waiting in heaven for her beloved to die and join her — was almost an obsession with the American. Thus Lavercam, in *The Sons of Usna* (Act V, scene xi), exclaims on her reunion with Caffa:

> Here have I been these eighteen tedious years,
> Waiting for thy dear soul — praying to God
> That he might lift thee up to Heaven, to make
> It Paradise indeed. . . .

"The Vigil in Aiden" is the most prominent (though by no means the best) of Chivers's poems on this subject. In it Lenore cries:

> I have prayed for thee in Heaven —
> All thy sins are now forgiven —
> Thou art pardoned — thou art shriven —
> O! forget not thy Lenore!

Rossetti's parallel passage (as it first appeared in *The Germ*) was this:

> "I wish that he were come to me,
> For he will come," she said.
> "Have I not prayed in solemn Heaven,
> On earth, has he not prayed?
> Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
> And shall I feel afraid?"

Rossetti said that he got his idea by reversing the situation of Poe's "Raven"; and of course the

"Blessed Damosel" antedated the publication of Chivers's more characteristic volumes. The fact remains, however, that the "Blessed Damosel" is much nearer Chivers than Poe; and I think Rossetti was probably as shy as Poe in admitting from what obscure source he got idea and atmosphere.

Professor Harrison, who grants Chivers less than he might, gives further testimony to the influence of Chivers on Rossetti. The "Soaring Swan" in *Nacoochee,* he claims had "evidently influenced" him.[9]

Kipling might also be mentioned here, as he came across *Virginalia*[10] and borrowed some phrases from "The Poet of Love" for his "The Files" (*Five Nations,* 1903) — without mentioning his source.

Meanwhile Chivers had acquired the name of "The Lost Poet." His reputation had died and been buried with him. In 1872, Bayard Taylor completed the ceremony by erecting a grotesque tombstone on the grave. In his *Echo Club* (*Night the Third*), "the Ancient" recalls the early days of American poetry, and adds: "Why, we even had a hope that

[9] Poe's *Works* (Virginian edition), Vol. VII, p. 284.

[10] The British Museum, according to an ancient legend, owns the only complete set of Chivers in existence; its catalogue, however, lists only *Virginalia* and *Atlanta.* The Harris Collection of Brown University contains eight of the eleven volumes — the largest collection I know of.

something wonderful would come out of Chivers! . . . Poe finished the ruin of him which Shelley began." Pressed by his amused audience, the Ancient racks his (rather bad) memory, mentions several titles, among them one wholly imaginary, distorts a stanza of "Rosalie Lee" into ungrammatical nonsense (this perversion is, to this day, quoted as an example of Chivers's poetry — as in the American edition of Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations* and in Meade Minnigerode's *Fabulous Forties*), misquotes another stanza from "The Poet of Love" in such a way as to drain it of all its original strength, and finally improvises a parody.

After such an epitaph, we can hardly be surprised that no anthologies contain a specimen of Chivers's works; that the few scattered articles on him have seldom been collected or remembered; and that only a very few histories of American literature contain so much as his naked name. Still more surprising is the number of volumes on Poe in which Chivers is completely ignored.

But no poet can live merely because he influenced others; Chivers's work has a life of its own; and we must determine his place on Parnassus.

In days not long past, it was a monotonous custom to compare his works with the "tumultuous vacuity of William Blake"; but of late, critics have become shy of disparaging the great Englishman. In truth, the parallels between the two are at first startling. Both were mystics in times that did not appreciate them; both versified and painted; both adored music; both were (literarily) better at lyrics than at larger works; both alternated between the naïve and the grandiose moods; both ignored academic rules; both have fine passages surrounded by others which are at least not immediately recognizable as poetry; both were influenced by Swedenborg and the Kabalah; both evolved metaphysical systems which were, in general points, the same; both believed that symbolic poetry was the highest form of literature; both hid their doctrines under their symbols; both were considered eccentrics; and both were (in Fuseli's words) "damned good to steal from." Indeed, parts of Chivers's "Little Boy Blue: A New Song" might have been written by the great Englishman:[11]

[11] This poem, however, was obviously suggested by "Little Boy Blue" (signed "M") in *The Leader* (London) for January 15 and 22, 1853 (Vol. IV, pp. 69, 93). It was reprinted in *Dodge's Literary Museum,* February 26 and March 5, 1853 (Vol. VI, pp. 189, 202) and in part in *Arthur's Home Magazine,* May, 1853 (Vol. I, p. 599). Chivers helped himself to title and meter, but otherwise the poems are quite different, in ideas and imagery.

Though he lay on the ground,
  Yet, in visions of night,
He was compassed all round
  By the angels of light.

Where the Cherubim rode
  On four lions of gold,
There this cherub abode
  Making new what was old.

Where the angels came down
  To the shepherds at night,
Near to Bethlehem Town,
  Clad in garments of light —

There the Little Boy Blue
  Blew aloud on his horn
Songs as soft as the dew
  From the Mountains of Morn.

But later criticism has distinguished between the cloud-compelling Blake and the mist-enfolded Chivers. Blake's feet never slipped; his obscurity was deliberate; and most of his " carelessness " has since been revealed as but finer craftsmanship. If we must compare the two, we should place Chivers's poems beside Blake's less perfect paintings. Then there actually is a parallel.

But the man to whom Chivers was really closest, next to Poe, was Thomas Lovell Beddoes, whose

Gothic dramas, though known to Chivers, were not published early enough to influence him. When Chivers praised Beddoes to Poe in 1845,[12] the *Bride's Tragedy* (1822) was the only book he could have known. In September, 1851, he saw extracts from *Death's Jest-Book* in the *London Examiner,* and sent an enthusiastic account of them to the *Georgia Citizen,*[13] concluding: "Upon the whole, these extracts cannot be equalled, in ideal beauty and natural passionate expression by any writer since the days of Shelley."

Again the parallels are startling. Both were known to have eccentric temperaments; both were doctors; both were obsessed by Death, and developed the graveyard *motif;* both poetically followed Byron and Shelley; both peered about the strange corners of the occult sciences (notably necromancy); both failed to sustain themselves in the drama, but succeeded in writing finely melodious songs; both indulged in sense-confusion, unexpected and involved metaphors, and elaborate stanza-patterns. Over and over they invoke identical atmospheres.

[12] *Century Magazine,* February, 1903, Vol, LXV, p. 444.

[13] *Georgia Citizen,* October 11, 1851. These two references should be added to the exhaustive bibliography in Royall H. Snow's *Thomas Lovell Beddoes* (New York, 1928).

The great golden hand on the Adamant Dial
Of the Clock of Eternity pauses in Heaven!
From Death's bony hand I now empty the Phial —
And the Morning is just like the Even!

Beddoes might have written this, but it actually comes from Chivers's "Valete Omnia" in *Virginalia.* Beddoes did write, however, this Chiversian appreciation of Shakspere:

I say he was an universe, and all material existence with its excellences and defects was reflected in shadowy thought upon the crystal waters of his imagination, ever glorified as they were by the sleepless sun of his golden intellect. And this imaginary universe had its seasons and changes, its harmonies and its discords, as well as the dirty reality. On the snow-maned necks of its winter hurricanes rode madness, despair, and "empty death, with the winds whistling through the white grating of his sides"; its summer of poetry glistening through the drops of pity; and its solemn and melancholy autumn breathing deep melody among the "sere and yellow leaves" of thunder-stricken life. . . .[14]

The differences between the two, however, are marked. Beddoes was far more critical, Chivers far more spontaneous. Yet Beddoes yielded completely to his innate morbidity: in his own words, "nothing's true but what's horrible," and of his horrors

[14] Letter to Proctor, March 3, 1824; *Complete Works of Thomas Lovell Beddoes,* edited by Gosse, London, 1928, Vol. I, p. 6.

he mixes a pretty salad. The reader knows that all is artificial and impossible, and enjoys it therefore. But Chivers's mentality was mainly characterized by the revolt and escape from this very sort of thing. Less deliberate, he could not linger for long in charnel-houses; he had to escape heavenward; and just here lay his success.

It is this very sincerity which perhaps saves Chivers from oblivion. He is appallingly sincere. His poems seem fragments torn straight from his brain. I do not know that sincerity, *per se,* makes literature better, any more than wholesomeness makes food appetizing. And yet the artifice of Beddoes could lead toward nothing better than "The City of Dreadful Night"; while Chivers has Poe, Swinburne, and Rossetti in his debt.

The tragedy of Chivers is obvious. He was a genius born out of time and place. America was still too unformed — too young — to have places prepared for his like. The genius usually requires a tradition in time which will enrich his material, and a position in space which is a focus of the higher forces of society. He needs precedents, books, intelligent companions, competition. All of these Chivers made up for as best he could; instinctively he must have known just how much repression and regulation he

required. Eager to give and eager to receive, he had nobody with whom to reciprocate. Poe was the one writer sympathetic enough to have made Chivers into a great poet, but Poe was temperamentally unfitted for the rôle.

For all this unsympathetic environment, Chivers was naturally and consciously an American, none the less. His subjects and settings were often deliberately drawn from what attracted him in his surroundings. Unlike Poe, he thrilled early to fenceless prairies, Indian life, the Mississippi. Yet his real interest lay elsewhere: his ultimate aim was a negation, not of Georgia, nor of America, but of outward reality. He turned instead to the yet unexplored inner world, the higher reality.

On this point it is interesting to contrast him with a fellow author of the same place and period. Augustus B. Longstreet in 1835 collected his *Georgia Scenes* from the newspapers in which they were originally published. These sketches in the manner of the *Spectator* described Georgian life of 1809; they are an irresponsible series of character studies, anecdotes, and country scenes, witty in the extravagant, robust manner which was later to become national. Though the form is Addisonian, the whole spirit is different; an antisentimental gale of ex-

uberant exaggeration characterizes all these accounts of dog-fights, gander-pullings, and horse-swappings. Indeed, so frankly grotesque were they that the next generation, hypersensitive toward such an account of their fathers, endeavored to intimidate the elderly author (since a judge, a preacher, and president of four Southern colleges) into preventing a reprint! The book is worth reading.[15]

Here was a man who found delight in the very crudeness of the society about him. Consequently he is a worthy ancestor to that branch of Americans which includes Mark Twain. He could accept what Chivers had to reject; but his material was excellent for prose only — it is absolutely the wrong food for transcendental poetry. Judge Longstreet could face his world with an amused, eighteenth-century detachment; Chivers, interested only in the strange inner world which was opening so curiously to so many Americans, explored it as best he could, companionless.

The graveyard at the foot of Parnassus is both broad and deep. Of the huge crowd of Chivers's noisy poetical contemporaries, virtually all lie here, hushed forever. With the utmost kindness, the most we can do for them is to engrave their names on

[15] I cannot be so enthusiastic about his *Stories with a Moral* (Philadelphia, 1912).

their tombstones. Over one, W. W. Story, an elaborate tabernacle has been erected by Henry James; but masterpiece though it is, it cannot resurrect one of the volumes which molder beneath it.

But Chivers has nothing to do with adequate talent: he was always either above or below mediocrity. Whether he failed or succeeded, he remained extraordinary. His place, then, is elsewhere. Not on the mountain's crest; for that is reserved for the giants Shakspere, Goethe, Homer, and Dante. Nor on the height just below, where those of more limited perceptions but perfect expression are to be found: Keats, Shelley, Poe, Coleridge, and their fellows. Chivers's place is still humbler. Inspiration and Technique are the twin wings on which every poet soars; and both of Chivers's lacked many feathers. But occasionally in his eccentric flight, he shot high — much higher, I believe, than the world has ever realized.

Chivers's appeal is limited to those who appreciate the poetic psychology. Great harmonies, sustained efforts, were things of which he was usually incapable. There are probably few of his poems which the merest tyro in versification could not today improve almost offhand, with a facile smoothing of meter, or the change of an adjective. This, the

easiest part of a poet's job, was just what Chivers could not do. But on the other hand, again and again he achieves effects which he and none other has ever accomplished. Momentaneous and intermittent, occasionally these effects cluster into some constellation of " sweet, unsustained song," whose burning pierces to our duller atmosphere. In short, Chivers is a poet for poets, not for the academicians. That the poets have recognized this already, and have helped themselves full-handed to his inspirations is only too clear.

The byways of literature are dusty and weedy, but they are also lined with wildflowers that will never be developed in hothouses. In Chivers's case, the lane did not end abruptly in a thicket, but was actually a short-cut across the years, as Poe, Swinburne, and perhaps Rossetti discovered for themselves. But there are other blossoms besides those they bore away.

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The collation of Chivers's books and pamphlets has its difficulties. First, the paper in all of them (except possibly *Search After Truth,* which I have examined only in photostats) is without those customary aids, watermarks and chain-lines. Secondly, all Chivers's books, though not his pamphlets, are put together in unorthodox gatherings of sixes or twelves. This was done by inserting a half-sheet, folded once (or twice), inside a full sheet folded twice (or thrice). The full sheets bear signatures of numbers or letters in normal order; the half-sheets repeat the signatures but indicate the difference by the addition of an asterisk or a 2, or by doubling the signature.

[1] The | Path of Sorrow, | or, | the Lament of Youth: | A Poem. | [printer's decoration] | By Thomas H. Chivers, M.D. | [printer's decoration] | [rule] | [six lines of blank verse] | [rule] | [printer's decoration] | Franklin, T. | Published by the author. | [rule] | 1832.

4° in sixes: A–K^{6}, L^{2}: pp. [i]–viii, 9–132.

P. [i], title; p. [ii], printers; p. [iii] half-title; p. [v], Contents; pp. vii–viii, Dedication; pp. [9]–132, text.

Remarks: Sig K* precedes K. Pp. vii–viii are misnumbered v–vi.

[2] Conrad and Eudora; | or, | the Death of Alonzo. | A Tragedy. | In Five Acts. | Founded on the Murder of Sharpe, by Beauchamp, | in Kentucky. | [rule] | By Thomas Holley Chivers, M.D. | [rule] | Philadelphia. | 1834.

4° in sixes: A^{2}, B–G^{6}, H^{4}, I–N^{6}: pp. [1–5], 6–144.

P. [1], title; p. [3], Dramatis Personæ; pp. [5]–82, text of the tragedy; p. [83], half-title, *Songs of the Heart;* pp. [85]–144, lyrics.

[3] Nacoochee; | or, | the Beautiful Star, | with | other poems. | By T. H. Chivers, M.D. | [rule] | [one line from Isaiah] | [four lines from Epipsychidion] | [rule] | New York: | W. E. Dean, Printer, 2 Ann Street. | 1837.

4° in sixes [two leaves without sig.], a^4, 1–12^6: pp. [i–xii], 1–143, [144].

P. [i], title; p. [ii], copyright 1837 by T. H. Chivers, M.D.; p. [iii], dedication; pp. [v]–x, Preface; p. [xi], Contents; p. [xii], poem, "To Idealon"; pp. [1]–143, text.

[4] The | Lost Pleiad; | and Other Poems. | By | T. H. Chivers, M.D. | [printer's decoration] | [line from Wordsworth] | [line from Young] | [printer's decoration] | New York: | Printed by Edward O. Jenkins, | No. 114 Nassau Street. | [rule] | 1845.

8°: two gatherings of 8 without sigg.: pp. [1]–32.

P. [1], title; p. [3], Contents; p. [4] Prefatory Apologue; pp. [5]–32, text.

Remarks: pamphlet printed in double columns.

[5] Search After Truth; | or, | A New Revelation | of the | Psycho-Physiological Nature of Man. | By T. H. Chivers, M.D. | [two lines of prose from W. H. Channing] | [rule] | [three lines of prose from Novalis; one line from Chrysostom; three lines from Victor Considerant] | [rule] | New York: | Printed by Cobb & Yallalee. | 1848.

4° in sixes: 1–5^6, 6^4: pp. [1]–64.

P. [1], title; pp. [3]–64, text.

Remarks: Described from photostatic copy. The signatures are so eccentric that under the circumstances it has been deemed best to describe simply what sigg. occur on what pages. They are as follows: 1* on p. 9; 2 on p. 13; 2† on p. 15; 2* on p. 21; 3 on p. 25; 4 on p. 33; 4* on p. 37; 5 on p. 45; 5* on p. 49; 6 on p. 57.

[6] Eonchs of Ruby. | A Gift of Love. | [rule] | By T. H. Chivers, M.D. | [rule] | [one line from Wordsworth] | [rule] | New York: | Published by Spalding & Shepard. | [rule] | 1851.

8° in twelves: [2 leaves without sig.], 1–6^{12}, 7^{10}: pp. [i]–iv, [5]–168.

Blank leaf; p. [i], title; p. [ii] copyright 1850 by T. H. Chivers; pp. [iii]–iv, Contents; pp. [5]–168, text.

Remarks: Sig. 6 is unnumbered. P. 43 not numbered; p. 102 is numbered 10.

[7] Memoralia; | or, | Phials of Amber | Full of the | Tears of Love. | A Gift for the Beautiful. | By T. H. Chivers, M.D. | [line of Greek from Callimachus] | Philadelphia: | Lippincott, Grambo & Co. | 1853.

4° in sixes, then 8° in twelves: 1–2^{6}, 2–6^{12}, 7^{10}: pp. [iii]–168.

P. [iii], title; p. [iv], copyright 1850 by T. H. Chivers; pp. [v–vi], Contents; pp. [vii]–xiv, Preface; pp. 15–168, text.

Remarks: *Memoralia* is simply *Eonchs of Ruby* decapitated and made into a new book by the addition of 26 pages of new material at the beginning. Pp. 15–26 has the running title "Memoralia"; thereafter the book is identical in sigg., misprints, paper, etc., with *Eonchs*.

[8] Virginalia; | or, | Songs of my Summer Nights. | A Gift of Love for the Beautiful. | By T. H. Chivers, M.D. | [one line of

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Remarks: Bound in at end of book are twelve leaves of advertisements without sigg., pp. 13–36.

[9] Atlanta: | or | The True Blessed Island of Poesy. | A Paul Epic — in three Lustra. | By T. H. Chivers, M.D. | [printer's decoration] | (Copy right secured.) | [printer's decoration] | Macon, Ga: | Printed at the Georgia Citizen Office. | 1853.

8°: A^8–B^4: pp. [1]–24.

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Remarks: Pamphlet.

[10] Birth-day Song of Liberty. | A | Pæon of Glory | for the | Heroes of Freedom. | By T. H. Chivers, M.D. | [four mottoes in German and Latin] | [printer's decoration] | Atlanta, Georgia: | C. R. Hanleiter & Co., Printers. | 1856.

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[11] The | Sons of Usna: | a | Tragi-Apotheosis, in Five Acts. | By | T. H. Chivers, M.D. | [rule] | [one line of Greek] | [rule] | Philadelphia: | C. Sherman & Son, Printers. | 1858.

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